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TO COME AGAIN.

BY WM. MACKINTOSH.

Has Winter stole, poor plant, each flower
That you in sunny hours graced?
Or have you in his grasping power
Those bright-hued robes of beauty placed?

Oh, no; he did not steal, but cast
My garb aside because it could
Not shield me from the biting blast;
And as a parent loving should,

He me dissolved and lulled to sleep
By sighing winds, and o'er my bed,
To shelter me from storm's fell sweep,
His hands a snowy mantle spread.

He bade me rest till Mother Spring
May work a newer dress to wear,
When birds all tune their throats and sing
Of Heaven's wisdom, love and care.

So were I not then gone awhile
You'd neither miss me much or mourn,
Nor greet me with a welcome smile
When wreathed in bloom I 'gain return.

A Strange Wooing.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN SEARCH OF HIM," "WHICH WAS HER DEAREST?" "UNDER A CLOUD," "A SLEEPING PRINCESS," ETC.

CHAPTER X.

THE next morning, when a visit to the Louvre was suggested, Ethel declared herself to be too ill and too tired to go.

"Well, we will stay in Paris another day, then," was Lord Eynesford's quiet response.

Finding from this that he was determined that she should go out with him, she yielded with the best grace she could, and the three sallied forth together.

It was impossible, however low the girl's spirits might be, for her to help being interested as they wandered through the long galleries, and gazed at the various objects of art which filled them.

Good Mrs. Devon was constantly finding herself so tired that she was obliged to sink down upon a seat, entreating his lordship to take Ethel to look at something meanwhile; but, whenever this happened, Ethel sat down too.

"I am tired as well; I said I was, before we came," said the girl obstinately.

This persistent refusal to be left alone with the Earl, made Mrs. Devon angry. At last they came to the Venus of Milo, and before this Ethel stopped, spell-bound. The majesty, the simple, dignified beauty of the great masterpiece almost took away her breath. She was lost in a dream of art.

Two ladies were coming down the gallery where the party stood. None of the party saw them coming, for Ethel was gazing at the Venus, Lord Eynesford's eyes were fixed upon her, and Mrs. Devon, seated on a comfortable lounge, had closed hers for a moment.

The ladies drew nearer, the elder leaning upon the arm of the younger. They paused before the statue, almost touching the couple standing by the iron railing surrounding it.

There was a momentary gleam in the splendid dark eyes of the younger lady, her lips parted, her breath came quickly.

"Ranulf! This is a strange place to meet!"

The Earl started a little—a very little. It was nearly eight years since any one had addressed him by his Christian name. He turned, and, instinctively, Ethel turned too; and her eyes met the baleful glance of Cora Beaufort.

There was a moment's pause, during which the four stood and looked at one another; but in that moment Cora had taken in both the alteration in the Earl's appearance and the *tout ensemble* of his betrothed. Then Lord Eynesford raised his hat, and offered his hand to both ladies.

"Mrs. Beaufort—Miss Beaufort—I am delighted to meet you again! Are you staying long in Paris? Allow me to introduce you to Miss Devon—and Mrs. Devon," he added, as the elder lady came up.

Ethel was fascinated at the sight of Cora's beauty. She was at once interested in this handsome woman who called the Earl "Ranulf".

The possibility of his having a christian name seemed never to have dawned upon her. She watched them both intently.

"How strange that we should meet here!" said Cora. "It is such a long, long time since you and I met—is it not, Ranulf?"

"Yes," he returned abruptly. "We parted in troubled times, and I have not yet accomplished the end I had in view when you saw me last."

His words were accompanied by a slight knitting of the brows.

"No," she said, lowering her voice sympathetically; "but I suppose you have given up the quest now?"

"Indeed! Why should you suppose that?"

She glanced over her shoulder at Ethel, who had turned away as if the conversation did not interest her. Cora's eyes rested on the girl with a look of intense hatred which would have horrified any one who had seen it.

"All the world has heard of your idyllic courtship," she said slowly. "You have at last found a heart to beat responsive to yours—a girl who is willing to take you, and whatever suspicions you are pleased to think surround you, into the bargain."

The Earl stepped a pace nearer to her, with a quick gesture of impatience.

"What does it matter what all the rest of the world think of you, if she believes in you!" concluded Miss Beaufort calmly.

"Miss Devon does not know," said her companion in a low voice—"she is not aware of the scandal concerning me which was diligently spread abroad at the time of my brother's death; for she has lived all her life away from Grange-le-Cross. I do not wish her to hear what the world was kind enough to say of me until I can also let her see proofs of my innocence. Will you oblige me by not mentioning the subject to her?"

Cora's face, as he thus unexpectedly put a weapon into her hands, was a study. It was as if he handed her a dagger, and had shown her, at the same time, his one vulnerable point. When her opportunity came she would take advantage of it.

She had often pictured to herself her first meeting with Eynesford; but never had she looked forward to such agony as this. He was neither glad nor sorry to see her—he was simply indifferent. The sight of her face was nothing to him—nothing!

She recalled, as she stood there, with her ready society smile on her lips, how he had lain on the grass at her feet, one summer long ago, telling her that his whole soul was wrapped up in her. As she looked at him now, her heart beat stormily, her pulses quickened.

Her first glance at him had been accompanied by an almost overwhelming feeling of tenderness, because he was so altered—oh, so altered! That girl—that ornamental milkmaid, who was doubtless only too glad to marry Lord Eynesford—had never known Ranulf Warristoun.

Cora had no other feeling than pity for him, as she remembered what he had been—the noble face, the brilliant eyes, the smile, made more fascinating by the touch of melancholy. Surely his engagement had not brought him perfect happiness; he did not smile at all now. His face was inscrutable as a mask; his utterance quiet and unimpassioned.

Only one thing was clear—he had forgotten! Had he only greeted her differently—had he betrayed, by look or sign, that he had not forgotten those bygone days, she might have forgiven him; but his indifference hardened her, and strengthened her desire for revenge.

With a light, careless intimation that she would carry out his wishes and avoid allusions to Lord Glanvil's death, she turned to her rival, and remarked, with an obvious desire to draw her into conversation:

"You are fond of sculpture, Miss—Devon?"

Ethel turned towards her; and the helpless rage in Cora's heart grew fiercer, as she realized how different this girl was from the "ornamental milkmaid" she had imagined her to be.

"Yes," answered Ethel; "I am fond of sculpture—very. I was mentally comparing the things here with those in the Vatican—the endless Cæsars, you know.

"'These later busts one counts by scores,
Half emperors and quarter emperors.'"

Cora stared. She was a clever woman; but she did not read Browning. She could not follow Ethel's train of thought; in fact, she was thoroughly confused at finding that the Earl's "rustic beauty" was a lovely and most refined girl, dressed in perfect taste, who had seen Rome and the Vatican.

"She will make quite a sensation when she is presented," thought Cora. "Oh, how I hate her!"

If she had been looking at Lord Eynesford, she would have seen a smile light up his face, as he continued Ethel's quotation:

"'One loves a baby face, with violets there—
Violets instead of laurels in the hair,
As those were all the little brows could bear.'

Do you think laurels inappropriate to the brows of youth, Miss Beaufort?" he asked quietly.

He knew that Ethel had turned her face to him, and was looking with wonder in her blue eyes at the idea of his quoting poetry.

"I don't know—I never thought about it," said Cora, feeling vaguely vexed.

"I think they are inappropriate," said Ethel.

"Why do you think so?" asked Eynesford, turning swiftly to reply to the first voluntary remark she had made to him since she came to Paris.

"Laurels should be the reward of merit. The very young cannot win them. The laurels on the brows of baby Protus would simply mean rank—such laurels would weigh heavily as lead."

"Do you two always talk in this strain?" asked Cora, wishing she could annihilate them both.

"What, about laurels?" said the Earl. "I don't think the subject ever came up before. You did not tell me how long you think of remaining in Paris, Miss Beaufort?"

"It is uncertain. We are waiting to hear from my brother."

"Ah—how is Lisle? Well, I hope?"

"Very well, thank you. He is going to marry the youngest Miss Hesketh, of Gainsbridge."

"Indeed! If you will give me his address, I will write and congratulate him."

"You don't mean that you would really take all that trouble for one of our family?" said Cora ironically.

She was leaning against the pedestal of one of the antiques, looking beautiful yet dangerous.

Her words brought the color to his face.

"I suppose I ought to apologize for a great deal of neglect," he said; "but I have been such a wanderer for the past eight years——"

"Oh, please don't apologize," she replied languidly; "there is no particular reason, that I know of, why the Earl of Eynesford should remember Ranulf Warristoun's intimate friends!"

"You are severe, Miss Beaufort!"

"Am I, Lord Eynesford? Excuse my taking such a liberty. I was thinking of the days when I was Cora and you were Ranulf."

"Those days are over then?" he said interrogatively.

"They are—over," as she gave him her her hand. "Good-bye! I suppose I ought to say it is a great pleasure to have met you; but I almost think the meeting has given me more pain than pleasure—you recall so many old memories; and it is seldom an unmixed pleasure to contemplate the past."

"Very seldom," he said meditatively. "That being the case, I had better say good-bye at once, and leave you to the doubtless far more agreeable contemplation of the present."

Mrs. Beaufort, who had been seated, talking to Mrs. Devon, now rose.

"Are you going to Chateau St. Etienne?" she asked of him.

"Yes—to-morrow."

"Oh, indeed! And when does the wedding take place?"

"Two days after, I believe."

Mrs. Beaufort paused, unable to find words to express her astonishment. Then, recovering herself, she shook hands with Ethel, murmuring some incoherent congratulations, and adding a hope that, when she came to England, they should see her at Park Lane.

The Earl stood still, watching Cora and her mother as they moved deliberately away. The expression on his face showed that he was puzzled.

"Miss Beaufort was engaged to my brother," he said to Mrs. Devon.

"Oh, yes; I remember her, Lord Eynesford! I remember seeing her in church at Grange-le-Cross, before Lord Glanvil went abroad. She is as handsome as ever, I think."

"She has not altered," he said laconically. "Ethel is looking tired; we had better go and find the carriage."

Cora and her mother walked on, away, out of sight of the Devons. Then Cora suddenly stopped, and sank down upon a seat as if her strength had forsaken her.

"These heated rooms make me feel faint; I must sit down a little while," she said, in a stifled voice. "Go on, mamma—I will join you when I am better."

Mrs. Beaufort walked away, and Cora laid her head back, closing her eyes.

"She does not love him in the least. Is it possible that a man of his penetration cannot see it? Yet she does not look mercenary—it is a different sort of face—something sweet about the expression of the mouth; she is surely not the sort of a girl to marry for a title. Never mind—I know my cue now! I shall have less acuteness than I have given myself credit for, if I do not succeed here!"

The sound of approaching footsteps roused her. She looked up to see Hector Fitzwarrene standing beside her. A strange look came into her eyes as she gazed searchingly at him.

"Here you are!" he said, with some signs of his old animation. "I take some credit to myself for finding you. I called at the hotel, heard you were here, followed you, and have not been in the building half an hour. I call that quick work!"

He took a seat beside her, while she still gazed anxiously upon him.

"Have you met——" she began and then

paused, laying her hand lightly upon his arm.

"Met any one I know? Yes. I have. How strange! Did you see them?"

"You met—them?" she said, speaking as though the words cost her a great effort.

"Yes—the Forbes-Hendersons. He was not looking well."

"Oh, not them—I did not mean them! Lord Eynesford and Miss Devon are here, too."

He uttered a sharp exclamation, half starting to his feet; but she kept him back with a gentle touch.

"No—you must not go; if you go now you will not only annoy Lord Eynesford, but you will spoil my plans."

"Your plans—what are they?" he asked, turning white.

"I don't think I shall tell you; you are not very prudent," she replied, looking at him mistrustfully from under her heavy lids.

"Of what use is it to have an ally, if you will not tell him your plans?"

"Your plans, Cora? What are they?" asked Mrs. Beaufort, who had returned just in time to catch the last words.

"I have a touch of rheumatism, mamma dear," said Cora, raising her large, innocent eyes to her mother's face—"a touch of rheumatism here in my shoulders; and my plan is to go to Mont-les-Bains—do you remember that lovely, quaint little place near St. Etienne?—and try what the waters will do for me. Don't you feel inclined to try the waters too, Mr. Fitzwarrene?"

"I think your plan is excellent," he said, with great gravity.

CHAPTER XI.

SUMMER seemed to have come back again when the carriage drove up to Chateau St. Etienne, bringing Lord Eynesford, his *fiancée*, and her mother.

It was an old French castle of the Renaissance era. Owing to its secluded position, it had escaped the horrors of the Revolution. Not so its owners.

The Lacours of St. Etienne had perished during the Reign of Terror—dying, like most of the *haute noblesse* of France, a great deal better than they had lived. One only, a certain George Lacour, had escaped the carnage, and had fled to that refuge for the destitute—England. His lands were confiscated; but the chateau itself, not happening to present any attractions to the good Republicans of the district, had remained empty.

Georges Lacour had a son born to him in England; that son was at college with Lord Eynesford. The rich young Earl and the well-nigh penniless son of the French refugee Count formed a friendship.

They went to France together, and they revisited the forgotten and desolate chateau, which struck the Earl of Eynesford's fancy. He was young, rich, unencumbered, and entirely his own master; so he contrived to put a handsome sum into the pocket of George Lacour, by purchasing the dilapidated old mansion.

Two years after this purchase was completed the two young men quarrelled violently.

Tradition said that they met in the woods near St. Etienne, and that Lord Eynesford left his friend there with a death-wound through the breast; but the cause of the quarrel was unknown.

There was a level bowling-green before the chateau, and on one side a square pond, on which sailed lordly swans.

The garden was laid out in terraces; weather-stained statues stood with baskets on their shoulders, overgrown with climbing geraniums; the yew trees along the upper terrace were cut to represent peacocks, and the gray stone walls were smothered in Virginia creeper, glowing with all its autumnal glories of gold and crimson.

In the centre of the bowling-green a tiny fountain threw up a thread-like jet of water, which quivered in the warm air and dropped with a musical tinkle into a stone basin beneath. On the edge of the basin a little stone faun blew his pipes, with cheeks dimpled with laughter, and quaint, pointed, furry ears.

There was a quiet, sunny, old-world aspect about the place, which, in happier moments, would have delighted Ethel. To-day she only noticed it as a prisoner might, to whom it is said—

"This is the final stage of your journey; you have reached the place in which you are to endure perpetual captivity."

Mrs. Devon thought it the most beautiful place she had ever seen. When they had rested, she walked all over the grounds with the Earl, wondering to see the orangeries filled with fruit, the grapes ripening large and purple in the open air, and the roses still in full bloom.

Ethel excused herself from joining them, nor did she appear at dinner.

This was a great disappointment to Landry, the major-domo, who had arranged the dining table with exquisite effect, in the hope of pleasing the future Countess.

The Earl and his future mother-in-law sat opposite to each other at the table, which Landry had placed near one of the open French windows. The table ornaments, candelabra, dessert-dishes and flower vases, were all in old chased silver.

The ripe peaches, warm-colored autumn leaves and deep golden and crimson dahlias made a delightful study of color, rich, yet subdued, against the snowy damask. The servants moved silently to and fro across the black polished floor. The wide hearth was filled with sunflowers.

The Earl was very silent during dinner, and afterwards paced alone outside the windows, up and down the terrace, without his usual consolation of a cigar.

Mrs. Devon retired early, paying Ethel a visit on her way to her room. She found the girl lying on her sofa with a book, and, telling her not to hurry herself the next morning, as the Earl did not want them to be at the church before eleven, she kissed her cheek, which was cool and passive, and left the room.

When she reached her own apartment she sat down to think over the strange drama in which she was playing a part. It was a wonderful piece of good fortune, no doubt. Her daughter was to be a Count as!

It was indeed a triumph for the agent's wife; but there was something about it which puzzled her—something unsatisfactory. She never saw the slightest attempt at love-making between the two. In fact, they scarcely ever addressed each other, as far as she knew.

She had noticed that, for the past two days, Ethel had worn a lovely diamond ring; beyond that there was nothing to intimate that they were lovers. Still she tried to console herself. Once married, and left together in this charming spot, they must grow to love each other; besides, what other motive than love could the Earl have had for making Ethel his bride?

So thinking, she rose, and was beginning her toilette, when a knock at the door startled her.

"Come in!" she said; and the door opened slowly to admit Ethel, in a white wrapper, her glossy hair hanging loose about her, her face as white as her gown, her lips parted and scarlet. The girl closed the door and set down her candle.

"My child, what is the matter?" asked her mother.

"The matter? Oh—nothing!" said Ethel, speaking as if scarcely aware of what she was saying.

Her mother approached her in some anxiety, and took one of the passive hands in her own. It was cold. The girl had seated herself on the end of the bed, leaning one elbow against the brass foot-rail, and her white cheek upon it.

"My child, you are as cold as a stone!" said Mrs. Devon. "What is it? Did you want me?"

"Yes; I think so. I don't know. I came—I think I came to say good night."

"I am afraid you have taken a chill. Let me give you some nitre."

"Yes; that is it. I have taken a chill," answered Ethel mechanically.

"Dear, dear—you are not going to be ill just now, surely!" said Mrs. Devon. "It all comes of traveling with the car windows open; but the air seemed as mild as in July. What can I do for you?"

Ethel rose, and walked twice up and down the room without speaking. Presently she stopped, her fingers on the handle of the door.

"What I really came for, was to ask—if I may sleep with you to-night——Oh, mother—mother!"

"My darling!" Mrs. Devon went to her at once. "The excitement has been too much for you—all so rapid—over-hurried, I think; though of course his anxiety cannot but be flattering. Of course you can sleep with me, Ethel. Don't cry—don't cry, there's a pet; it will exhaust you!"

For a few moments the girl placed her arms round her mother's neck, and gave way to two or three shuddering sobs which shook her from head to foot. Then she seemed suddenly to rally and collect herself. She stood up, moved away, and seated herself in a chair a little way off. Her white slender hands lay clenched upon the dark velvet arms, but the paroxysm was over.

Mrs. Devon brought her sal volatile, soaked her handkerchief in *eau de Cologne*, and then sat down, held one of the cold rigid hands and waited.

There was silence in the room for about a quarter of an hour. It seemed as though the loving uncomprehending touch of the mother's hand restored the girl's self-possession by degrees. At last, with a deep sigh, she stood up.

"What a strange attack," she said calmly—"it is over-fatigue, I think! Did I frighten you, poor mother? No; I am not going to be ill. I think, after all, I will not sleep with you to-night—I have one or two things to see to. Good night."

"But, Ethel——" began Mrs. Devon.

"If you are anxious, come to me in half an hour's time. You will find me in bed and asleep," said Ethel. "I wonder if I shall ever bid you good night again, mother? How little you and I have had of each other's company in our lives!"

She took up her candle again, and the next moment was gone. Her mother went to the door, and watched the slim figure in its white soft draperies walk down the dark wide gallery.

With the soft sound of Ethel's closing door, the whole of the chateau was profoundly still. To the Ear of Eynesford, as he sat by the window, watching the moonlit scene, it seemed as if the night would never end.

* * * * *

In the afternoon of the day of Ethel Devon's arrival at St. Etienne, a man was walking quickly down a retired back street in Paris. He was plainly dressed, and it was difficult, from a first glance, to decide whether he was a gentleman or not. He was evidently not at all familiar with the dingy locality through which he was passing, for he paused several times to ask the way.

At last he stopped before a tall dark block of lodging-houses, and rang the bell of one of them.

A dirty greasy-looking woman came in answer to his summons, and looked at him from top to toe.

"No rooms likely to suit Monsieur," she said sullenly.

"I want none. Does M. Lacour inhabit one of Madame's spacious and airy apartments?"

"The old Lacour? Yes, he is here still, I thank the Saints. Does Monsieur wish to see him?"

"I do. I am his son."

"His son! But to think of that! I swear to you, Monsieur, that I always do my best to make your father comfortable. He is the only one of all my tenants who pays regularly."

"Is he at home now?"

"But yes; he seldom goes out. He grows a trifle infirm, and there are many stairs."

She took a key from a long row hanging in the passage, and directed the young man up the steep, black, mysterious ascent that she called a staircase.

The visitor, with a moody expression on his face, went up. When he had nearly reached the top he paused, and unlocked a door leading to the suite of two rooms inhabited by his father.

His light tap elicited a querulous "Come in," and he entered.

An old man, small, lean, and shrivelled, sat before the stove, stirring a cup of broth. He was neatly dressed, but his unshorn chin bristled with white stubble. His hair stood in erect tufts round his head; his face was yellow and wrinkled; but his jet-black eyes gleamed with almost the brilliancy of youth.

He turned as his visitor entered, and stared at him fixedly. Presently a look of annoyance and contempt overspread his features.

"It is then thou—fool!" he said in a high-pitched, distinct voice.

His son inclined his head to receive this paternal greeting. Then he closed the door, advanced to a chair, brought it near to the old man, and sat down.

"And how dost thou find thyself, my father?"

"As ever—a fixed and useless being. Here I am, and here I shall be, I suppose, until I start for Pere la Chaise. And how art thou?"

"Say thou art glad to see me, my father."

"It is small pleasure to see the undutiful," was the tart response of M. Lacour, senior.

Perhaps the younger man, as he sat in this room, the rent for which came out of his pocket, and saw the old man clothed with clothing he had paid for, eating and drinking food which his money had procured, might have thought the accusation uncalled for; but he appeared to find some sting in it, for he rested his chin on his thin, nervous brown hand, and stared moodily at the fire.

"And what dost thou in Paris, Theophile?" pursued the old man, in a tone which seemed to imply that no one but a fool, like his son, would ever contemplate a visit to that city.

"I came with my mistress. Mrs. and Miss Beaufort are in Paris."

"Do they make a long stay?"

"I know not."

The old man shot a brilliant glance from his beady eyes at his son's discontented profile.

"Thou lookest older, and surely not more handsome than when I saw thee last," he remarked encouragingly.

"It is five years since we met," Theophile said.

"And all these five years thou hast not repented of thy folly?"

The young man shifted his position so as to glance at his father; and there was a strange look in his eyes.

"All things come round to those who wait," he said.

Old Lacour fixed his eyes upon him.

"Thou hast not come to tell that thou hast recovered thy senses at last? That were surely too much to expect from a simpleton like thee!"

"Thou art furiously unjust!" cried his son, with sudden anger. "I tell thee, I hate thy unforgiving malice! I am no assassin, to avenge my father's quarrels in blood; thou askest too much of me."

"I ask nothing of thee! I know better," was the reply, in a tone of deep contempt. "Thou art no son of the Lacours; thou art the son of thy *bourgeoise* mother, and hast her stolid ignorance. Speak not to me! I have no patience with thee—owl!"

"And this is the way my father speaks to me, because I refuse to dog and murder the son of the man who he thinks injured him," cried Theophile indignantly. "In pity's name, what wouldst thou have, my father? You shot Glanvil down like a dog—his father died six months later, of a broken heart—what yet remains, before thou art satisfied?"

"The Earl of Eynesford yet remains—and the oath I took that no Warristoun should ever bear that title yet remains!" said the old man, shaking a palsied fist at his son. "Thou—thou art not a true Lacour—thou canst not know the outrage, the insult, I suffered at the hands of that Englishman! Great Heaven, how shouldst thou understand it! He carried away by force the maiden I loved; he married her secretly; he offered her that insult because he would not brave the cold looks of his English friends! He took her to Chateau St. Etienne—the castle, the home of my ancestors. I had let his money defile my hands—I had sold my patrimony to him—and that was what he did! Used it as a hiding-place for the beautiful and high-born young wife whom he was yet ashamed to own!"

Here the old man paused a moment, half choking at the memory of his wrongs.

"So we fought," he went on—"what else remained to me?—and he wounded me, as he thought, mortally! It was then I swore that my vengeance against him would be life-long! I swore it secretly to myself, as I lay with my life-blood ebbing away in the moss in the woods of St. Etienne. And then she died—died broken-hearted at his neglect; and, even dead, he would not grant her the place she should have taken, but carried her away and laid her in a churchyard alone! And he married—married and had children. When his eldest son was born, I crawled to the grave of the woman I loved, and swore that no more Warristouns should ever bear the title, and that there should never be another Countess of Eynesford—never! You—you know all this. Why do you sit there so silent, so unmoved? You have heard of your father's wrongs; why not complete the work he began? I waited till my enemy's sons were grown. I waited and watched till I saw that Glanvil, the elder, was dearer to him than his own soul. I—shot—down—Lord Glanvil in the woods of St. Etienne, in the very place where my life-blood had dyed the moss nearly thirty years before! Wilt thou tell me his father did not know whose hand it was that struck him down?"

The younger Lacour rose abruptly, and walked to the window. There was a look of disgust and horror in his eyes.

"I do not understand thy feelings," he said. "I am a *bourgeoise*, and proud to be so. I have no ambition. Cease to talk of such things, I pray thee."

"Thou dost not understand? No, no; I know it well. Thou knowest not love, else wouldst thou know hate, too."

Standing at the window, Theophile smiled darkly.

"I know not love, thou sayest?" he said.

"No; how shouldst thou? *Bourgeoise* though thou art, I think the beauties of the servants' hall would have no charms for thee."

"Thou art right, my father," said Theophile still smiling to himself.

The elder Lacour glanced up at Theophile for a moment, then stared again at the stove, and stirred his broth.

"How thou canst reconcile thyself to the menial position which thou occupiest passes my comphension," he said peevishly.

"It does—does it?" said Theophile, turning round upon him suddenly. "Then I will tell thee my reason. Thou shalt know that at least I am capable of one such sentiment as kindles the breast of the high-born and the noble. I took service, first, because thou wast starving and I had to support thee; but that, I suppose, is a motive which would actuate even a *bourgeois*. Constantly my pride cries out that I am wrongly placed, that I should not be where I am. Why do I stay? It is a very simple affair. I cannot go! I am chained, rooted to the service of Miss Beaufort! I adore my mistress!"

The old man raised his face to his son's with a half-incredulous smile. A feeling of astonishment came over him as he looked at the flushed face and glittering eyes of his son; for, though Theophile spoke quietly and with a total absence of the extravagant gestures his father made use of, he was evidently terribly in earnest.

"The very soul of my love is its unselfishness," pursued the young man. "It is hopeless—I know it; but she cannot prevent my loving her. For her—for her—what is there I would stop short of? To ease her of one moment's trouble I would cut off my right hand!" He laughed bitterly. "Father, I cannot in cold blood hate a man because his name happens to be Lord Eynesford—I cannot do it at your bidding! But"—he lowered his voice almost to a whisper, his eyes glowed—"if she hated him—if it were she who stood before me, and said: 'This man has caused me suffering; punish him!'—by Heaven, I should not hesitate!"

The old man watched him keenly as he hid his eyes for an instant with his hand.

"I did not think thou hadst it in thee," he remarked.

"Is that love?" asked Theophile brokenly.

"It is love," said his father slowly.

"Now, I have made confession of my weakness, I must go," observed the young man, rising.

"Thou fulfillest the family fate, poor boy—thou lovest where there is no chance of a return!" said his father, with unwonted softness.

"I saw your enemy's son—the present Lord Eynesford—the other day," Theophile remarked, taking up his hat.

"Eh—what? Where didst thou see him?" asked the old man eagerly.

"He was here, in Paris, two days ago."

"Here!"

Georges Lacour staggered to his feet.

"With the young lady he is going to marry."

"He is going to marry! When?"

"To-morrow, I believe."

A smothered cry broke from the old man's lips.

"Then there will be another Countess of Eynesford! I swore there should never be! Theophile, canst thou not help me? Thou hast no spirit—none! It must be stopped—this marriage! If I had but my strength again, for one day—one day!"

He had risen from his chair, tottered half-across the room to his son, and then fell heavily.

Theophile lifted the light shrivelled figure and laid it upon the neat little bed. Then he summoned the portress.

"I am obliged to go now," he said, presenting her with a five-franc piece.

"See to the father for me. I shall come and see him again to-morrow."

Then he descended the Stygian darkness of the stairs, and heaved a sigh of relief as he stepped out into the comparatively pure air of the streets.

CHAPTER XII.

CORA BEAUFORT, seated alone in the hotel, was gazing out of the window with fierce dark eyes; she was picturing how fair and mellow the gray chateau must be looking under that cloudless blue sky. She could fancy the tints of the autumn woodlands behind on the hill, and the crimson glow of the creepers on the walls.

And they were there—Lord Eynesford and the bailiff's daughter.

Were they walking up and down the terrace together, looking at the rose-and-saffron-shaded sky?

She was growing morbid; it would not do. Lifting in her firm well-shaped hands a letter which she had written, she laid a finger on a small bell and rang it.

"Has Theophile come in yet?" she inquired.

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"Send him to me at once."

He appeared in a moment, quiet and ready as usual, a reserved silent man; but Cora was too much of a coquette to be altogether ignorant of her power over him.

"Theophile, shut that door; come and stand here, please. I am going to give you a proof of my great confidence in you."

"Mademoiselle is very, very good."

"Listen! I want you to undertake a difficult, dangerous task for me. I want you to go on a journey at once—to-night. Will you?"

"Whatever mademoiselle commands."

"You could start to-night?"

"In half an hour, mademoiselle."

"I thought I could depend upon you," she said, with a smile.

A throb of ecstasy passed through him as she spoke.

"Mademoiselle, I would die to serve you!"

She looked at him searchingly.

"Do you know," she said, "I really believe you would."

He did not reply, and she leaned her cheek upon her hand, apparently absorbed in thought.

"If I send you on a difficult, even dangerous enterprise, it is only fair to let you partly know my plans," she continued.

"Theophile, I persuaded my mother to bring you to Paris because I thought you would be useful to me. You are, ostensibly, going to-night to take rooms for us at the hotel at Mousse-les-Bains. If my mother—if any one questions you, that is your errand. Of course, you are really going to do so; but you are going to do something else for me, as well."

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"Will you swear to me, Theophile, that you will serve me faithfully, and never, never betray me?"

"Mademoiselle, I will swear anything you ask me—I am yours! There is nothing I will not do!" answered the young man, as steadily as he could, for his head seemed to be reeling.

"Then I trust you; and I will tell you something. There is some one who has injured me deeply—has grossly insulted me—and I want to be revenged upon him."

"Mademoiselle has but to command—what do I care for risks?"

"That's right," she said, smiling. "My enemy is some one you have seen before, and know by name. It is the Earl of Eynesford!"

By a powerful effort he repressed the cry which rose to his lips, and simply repeated the name after her in a dazed way. She looked up quickly.

"Well?" she questioned, half suspiciously.

"Mademoiselle, the Earl has injured you; it is enough for me. You could give me no task so precious as to avenge your quarrel."

She was satisfied, and glanced down at a paper on which she had written some notes. Theophile Lacour wiped away the cold perspiration which stood like beads on his forehead.

"Come here," she said; "stand here, by the table. I will give you your directions."

Half an hour later the young man opened the door and came out with a strange expression on his face. He paused a moment, with his hand over his eyes, as if to collect his thoughts. Then he hurried away to make preparations for a journey, which he completed with amazing celerity, summoned a *fiacre*, and went off.

"Stop at a post office," he said to the driver; and, as they went along, he scribbled a note to his father.

"I have taken up your quarrel. By a strange fatality, your enemy is also the enemy of the woman I love. It is more than enough for me. I will let you know more soon. "T. L."

* * * * * * *

When, after an absence of eight years, Lord Eynesford had suddenly appeared at St. Etienne—had ordered the whole place to be set in order, and had engaged servants—every one of course predicted that he was going to be married.

What was more natural? Since Lord Glanvil's death St. Etienne had been deserted. It was a lovely spot to which to bring a bride for her honeymoon; and every one about the place hoped that it would be the beginning of happier days; no one hoping more sincerely than Walter Strickland, the chaplain of the English church.

"The Earl is still at St. Etienne, Hester," he said one morning to his sister. "He certainly must be going to bring a wife here."

Hester Strickland was an invalid, always confined to a sofa; but she was one of those strong, calm, lovable women whom to know is a comfort and a pleasure. She and her brother had known Lord Eynesford almost from his birth.

When only a boy he had persuaded his father to offer the chaplaincy of St. Etienne to Walter—then just ordained—because he thought the balmy southern climate would be beneficial to Hester. The place just suited the brother and sister. They had no ambitions—their strongest desire was to make each other happy. The peaceful beautiful life was what they both loved; and their thankful affection towards him who had placed them there never failed.

That autumn morning, when Walter entered their little sitting-room, and spoke of Lord Eynesford, a look of pain came over Hester's face.

"Ranulf must be changed," he said; "if he has been at St. Etienne three days without coming to see me."

"Talk of an angel," exclaimed Walter cheerily, "here he comes, up the path! Hester, how he has altered!"

"Eight years make a great difference to a young man," returned Hester nervously.

She settled the pretty crimson cushion more neatly on her couch, and her cheeks were flushed with expectancy.

The return of the young Earl, upon whom she had always looked as a younger brother, was an epoch in her peaceful life.

Walter was at the door, joyously welcoming his visitor.

"Ranulf, my boy, is it positively you yourself in the flesh!" he cried exultingly. "I thought you had disappeared from this earthly sphere altogether!"

"I'm too bad a penny not to turn up—you might have known that," said the Earl's deep melancholy voice, as, passing Walter with a hearty grip of the hand, his eyes traveled on to Hester, and rested on her bright face with undisguised pleasure.

Her first glance at him shocked her. As she gazed upon the weary cynical expression which his face generally wore, she felt sure that the last eight years had been to him most unhappy ones. But the expression vanished when his eyes met hers, and he walked to her couch and took one thin white hand in both his thin brown ones.

"You look not a day older—not an hour less happy, not in the least changed since we parted, Hester," he said.

"Dear boy, I wish I could say the same of you! Ranulf, Ranulf—what have you been doing with yourself?"

He had taken his old seat, close to the head of her sofa. He pulled the ends of his black moustache as he answered:

"Oh, knocking about!"

"Knocking about, indeed," she said; "but what a real treat your letters were to me! I almost felt as if I went everywhere with you Ranulf! Your descriptions were life-like."

"I am very glad they pleased you. When a man has only one friend, it's his bounden duty to do his best to amuse her. No one except you cared whether I was alive or dead."

"Ranulf, Ranulf—how often have I told you that your besetting sin is self-depreciation! Why, hundreds of people are longing to see you—you know they are!"

"Not to see me, Hester—to see the Earl of Eynesford. I am careful to make the distinction."

"It's a morbid state of mind to be in. You mistrust every one."

"I am unfortunately right in my trusts and mistrusts," said Eynesford refusing to shake off his gloom.

"Oh, come," cried Walter, sinking into an arm-chair nearby, "you're not always right, you know, Ranulf! There was that agent of your father's—I forget his name—you always swore he was not to be trusted; but he's all right, isn't he?"

The Earl carefully inspected the rim of his hat as he answered slowly:

"Well, I suppose I must say—I was mistaken there."

"Grudgingly done, Ranulf!" cried Hester, laughing. "When you are wrong, you should admit it with good grace; that was a fair defeat! I remember you used to be quite eloquent on the subject of that man—how he carried treachery in his face and so on."

"Was I? Well, I suppose I was a fool; but don't talk of my mistakes any more."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

AN old gentleman, on taking up his paper, found that he had mislaid his spectacles. "What a nuisance!" he exclaimed. "I have lost my glasses somewhere, and I can't read the paper." Whereupon his little three-and-a-half-year-old grandchild, desiring to assist him, suggested, "G'an'pa, you go outside and look froo se window, and I'll hold se paper up so you can read it."

Bric-a-Brac.

FOUNDATION-STONES.—We make much ado about laying foundation-stones, and bury beneath them bottles containing coins, etc. This ceremony is the lingering on, in a feeble form, of the old sacrifice of burying under a new building a living animal. Money is now substituted for a living animal, and the lingering animal was a substitute for a human victim.

TYPOGRAPHICAL CURIOSITIES.—In England, the following names of places occur: Windrush and Churndon, Droitpool and Crainy, Foulmire and Freshwater, Horn and Hound, Chew and Cowbit, Easter-High and Advent, Sleep and Snoring, Tongue and Wrangle, Bury and Corse, St. Blazey and Kettle, Eagle and Cliffe, Ease and Sheepwash, Offcot and Coldstream, Sow and Fallowfield Warboys and Slaughter, Arrow and Badshot.

COUNTING.—Just as digit, in arithmetic, means a finger, and points back to the period when men reckoned on their two hands alone, so calculus means a pebble, and points back to the period when they reckoned with little heaps of stones, or cowries. To calculate is merely to heap up pebbles. Even the very phrase, "to carry one," "to carry two," still used by our school-children, retains a memory of the time when ten pebbles were taken from the heap of units as soon as it reached ten or more, and one of them was added in compensation to the other pile immediately above it.

LUCK.—An old proverb makes it unlucky for a woman to marry a man whose surname begins with the same letter as her own. A curious custom with regard to marriages existed until a very recent period in Suffolk, that, if the younger sister married before the elder, she must dance in the hog's trough. In the West of England, where the custom also existed, it was a fixed rule that the lady should dance in green stockings. June was the month the Romans considered the most propitious season of the year for contracting matrimonial alliances, especially if the day chosen were that of the full moon, or the conjugation of the sun and moon. The month of May was especially to be avoided, as under the influence of spirits adverse to happy households.

ANIMALS IN JAPAN.—Some of the animals of Japan are quite different from the same species that are seen in America. The cats, for instance, have the shortest kinds of tails, or else none at all. Being deprived of this usual plaything, they are very solemn pussies. An American once took one of these tailless cats to San Francisco as a curiosity, and it utterly refused companionship with the long-tailed feline specimens there; but finding a cat whose tail had been cut off by accident, the two became friendly at once. Japanese dogs are almost destitute of noses, having the nostrils set directly in the head. The smaller the nose the more valuable the breed.

ST. VALENTINE.—This saint, history tells us, was cruelly beaten with clubs and afterwards beheaded, A.D. 270, by order of Claudius II., for succoring the martyrs under the Emperor's persecutions. How he first came to be the guardian saint of lovers it is almost impossible now to say, unless, as one old writer puts it, it be that "he was a man of most admirable parts, and was so famous for his love and charity that the custom of choosing Valentines upon his festival (which is still practiced) took its form from thence." Probably the day of his death may have something to do with his amorous powers, for, on the fourteenth of February, rustics believe that birds begin to choose their mates.

WIND AND WATER.—The great overruling superstitions of China are, the fear of the dead, and the belief in Feng-Shui. The latter word means literally "wind and water", and seems to typify both the good and baneful influences of physical phenomena. It is the existence of these two superstitions which really forms the barrier to progress in China, because they interfere with the reception of foreign ideas and the development of industrial projects in mining, railway making, etc. Feng-Shui is defined, as "the path of the Great Dragon, who rushes through the air just above the houses, spouting blessings in showers from his nostrils. He flies straight forward, unless by evil chance he should strike against some high building, in which case he turns aside at an angle, and so the houses beyond lose their share of his blessing. Hence the zealous care of the Chinese house-builders lest anyone should build a house higher than his neighbor, and the singular uniformity of domestic architecture."

WHY?

BY J. A. MACDONALD.

SHE: Why beats my heart so strangely when thou'rt near?
Why do I tremble?—is it joy or fear?
Why do I sorrow when thou art not nigh,
And wish thee back again? Oh! tell me, why?

HE: 'Tis love, true love, sweet love, which makes thee so,
Whose light gleams o'er my path where'er I go.
'Tis love which makes us sorrow when apart,
Which joineth hand to hand and heart to heart.

SHE: Why droop mine eyes so low at meeting thine?
Why round my mem'ry doth thy image twine?
Why, in thy presence, am I glad yet sigh?
Is't joy, or is it pain? Oh! tell me, why?

HE: 'Tis love, fond love, firm love, and only love,
As pure as stars that gleam so bright above.
'Tis love which holds all hearts beneath its sway—
Which lives for ever, and which lasts for aye.

IN SEVERED PATHS

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PENKIVEL," "OLIVE VARCOE," "WITH THIS RING I WED THEE," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXV.—(CONTINUED.)

I HAVE your promise, Oliver; you will go to my father and repeat exactly what I have said?"

"My dear fellow, if necessary I will; but you will get well—there will be no need;" and Harold thrust down the choking feeling in his throat with a supreme effort.

"Over there," continued Cumberland, pointing to his desk, "you will find a letter addressed to my father; that will tell you where to find him. Do not be startled that his name is not the same as mine, Oliver;" and he grasped Harold's hands feverishly. "I am like the prodigal son: I have left home, father, name, and heritage—all to escape from—— Hark—he is calling me now! Hold me down, Oliver! Do you know that if I once give way I shall be compelled—forced against my blood—to return home and do his bidding?"

The wildness with which he spoke and his haggard look made Harold think he raved, so, obeying his behest, he held him firmly with both arms.

But in a moment the paroxysm passed, and Cumberland lay back on his pillow pale and quiet.

"It was that diabolical tune the band is playing that unnerved me," he said feebly, wiping the moisture from his brow.

Harold listened, and faintly in the distance he caught the echo of military music, while in the air played there floated by dim mystic memories of far-off battles, of things distant and dead, of the pain of souls long departed, the grief of hearts long cold.

"Who gave them that accursed music?" asked Cumberland sharply.

"I cannot tell you. But it reminded me of an air I heard once in circumstances that—have altered all my life," concluded Harold abruptly.

"Yes," said Cumberland, as if not heeding his words. "Yet it is not the same," he continued dreamily, as if to himself; "it is only the spirit of pain in it that gives it the likeness."

The music had passed out of hearing, but the tramp of men followed it, and Cumberland listened to the steady march of many feet with a smile lighting up his wan face.

"There is life in that sound, Oliver. I like it. The concentrated energy of so many hearts beating as one, bent on one purpose, conquers all before it. Oh, if only one human soul was bound to mine, to fight my battle with me, I think I could live!"

Harold pressed his hand in silence; he regarded his words as outpourings from a fevered brain, and knew not how to answer him.

"There is one other person I should like to see, Oliver, if you would," said Cumberland in a moment.

His voice and manner were more composed, but his strength was ebbing; in a little while Harold saw he would be past speech.

"My dear lad, I will see any one you wish."

"And you will give her a last message from me," continued Cumberland, in fainter tones. "Tell her I was glad to go—glad to be rid of the burden she knows of that I had not strength to bear—glad to give up the battle I could not fight. If she could have stood by my side always, I might have had strength to resist, but without her I had no power, no will."

He stopped and put his hand upon his brow, then looked up at Harold a little wildly.

"It is horrible such things are allowed," he said—"a human being in the hands of another, and that other perchance a fiend—compelled to obey his will while the soul shudders at him and the spirit faints with fear and loathing. Yes, yes; I am glad it is nearly over. And you will thank her, Oliver, for all her goodness to me, and tell her my last thoughts were of her. That is all. I fear I cannot talk any more."

"My dear Cumberland, give me her name if you can, and I will do your bidding, even if I have to go from one end of England to the other."

"Her name is Armstrong—Mary Armstrong—the best, kindest——"

His words panted on his lips, and his fainting eyes gazed up into Harold's bloodless face in terror, for his clenched hand was resting on the bed, and over all his aspect there was a strange dazed look, like that of a man suddenly finding himself face to face with some unexpected horror.

In a moment Harold had recovered himself; the color slowly returned to his blanched face, and he looked down wistfully on the faint and dying figure before him.

He saw a weak slight lad, whose delicate features were worn to a shadow, whose thin hand was searching gropingly for the kindly clasp of his, and his heart turned faint within him.

A sob rose in his throat; he touched the poor wan hand and turned away.

"Good-bye, Cumberland. I will do your bidding. I know where Mary Armstrong lives."

A smile rose to Cumberland's lips, a slight pressure came from his thin fingers, and he and Harold had parted.

In his own room Harold sat down to think, with brain still bewildered.

Was it possible—could it be possible? Was this poor fragile dying lad the slayer of Tristram Carbonelli? And, because he had not seized him by the throat and cried in his fainting ears, "You are an assassin!" had he lost Estrild and love and happiness for ever?"

The question rose again and again in his racked mind without answer, without hope of answer; but he felt that even to win Estrild he could not torture the dying, he could not go to magistrate or colonel and denounce Cumberland as a criminal flying from justice.

And was he this? Under what cloud of mystery and misery had he become guilty?

The words which he had taken for the wanderings of fever bore a new meaning now to his mind, and he fancied that Cumberland might be as much the victim of a strange fate as Tristram Carbonelli's.

He had never thought to recall Trevel's dying declaration with the hope of finding comfort in it, but he did so now—"An accident—as I hope for mercy, an accident."

Yes, it was surely that, no matter how mysterious the circumstances in which it had occurred; and he would let Cumberland die in peace.

With this thought he took Mary Armstrong's gift from his desk and laid it before him on the table.

"I have kept my word, I have not hurt him," he said; "and the hardest moment was when I looked on his dying face and recognized it as the face I had seen on board the East-Indiaman. Yes, that was how Captain Armstrong saved him; he was put on board that ship, before the storm overtook the Alert. And Mary Armstrong knew he was safe when she gave me this, the letter I brought told her."

All this was surmise, but Harold felt it was the truth, as, resting his head upon his hands, he reflected that even it was not too late to wrench the proof from Cumberland's dying lips.

What! Could he bring the sweat of agony on that poor wan face? Could he see that wasted frame writhe beneath the burden of his broken heart? If he had sinned, he was dying for his sin; it was enough.

"I saved his life once. I will not drag away with cruel hand the last feeble remnant of life in him now. No, I will not hurt him. Estrild will forgive me. I will go on board to-night, lest I should be tempted to steal once more to his bedside and stand over him as the avenger of blood."

Harold kept his word, and the ship sailed for England without his hearing or knowing whether Cumberland was living or dead.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"THERE is only one thing to be done now," said Mr. Vicat to his wife—"these young people must marry, and at once too."

"That's what you have been driving at!" exclaimed Mrs. Vicat. "It is a vile plot—a shameful plot! I'll have no hand in it."

"That's quite true, I shall certainly not ask you for your valuable aid; I prefer to manage the affair myself. I shall procure a special license for the ceremony."

Mrs. Vicat stared at him with round eyes of amazement.

"You may take a horse to a pond, but you can't make him drink," she said. "If you have fifty licenses, it won't make a marriage; Estrild will never be Gilbert's wife."

"We shall see," returned her husband. "The girl is alone in the world, her lover is dead; she has nothing to hope for, nothing to live for. Her spirits are broken; she will obey me. And after the marriage, in my opinion, she will not live long."

Mrs. Vicat grew a little pale.

"Don't tell me any of your diabolical plans," she said, gathering up her work hurriedly and running to the door. "I can't and won't hear them."

"You are a simpleton," returned Mr. Vicat politely. "I make a quiet remark on Estrild's state of health, and you immediately imagine——"

"No, no; I imagine nothing—I only know you have left no mean's untried to torture that poor girl to death. You have ordered Gilbert to terrify her with his wizard tricks; and you forced him to make an appointment with her at an improper time—a time that would cast a slur on her good name."

"Just so; she has made marriage a necessity."

"It is nothing of the kind—you only want to secure her wealth for yourself; your son is not long for this world—you will be his heir. Mr. Vicat, I shall pray for the destruction of your schemes."

Mrs. Vicat fled with these words; she had passed the line which her husband allowed in their recriminations.

He permitted no reference to prayer or to religion—she might do all things except pray against him; there was a curious vein of superstition in the man which made him fear prayer much in the same way as the savage fears the medicine-man.

He glared after his wife now, with fury in his eyes, but he guessed that she had taken refuge with Carrie, and he did not care to follow her to his daughter's presence.

"Time and opportunity come to the man who waits for them," he said sententiously, as he banged his front-door on the domestic din that rang through staircase and hall, and hurried on to his office.

Of all the victims he had made through his cruel life, his unhappy son was the most miserable; wrecked in health and nerve, he had sought refuge in strange studies for a relief to his pain and solitude.

He had learned secrets of which in his weakness he could make no use; he had fathomed depths into which he dared not look.

But neither occult mysteries nor transient glimpses into the miracles of science could relieve the dull ache of loneliness or feed the heart-hunger he felt; one other thing they could not do, they never lifted from his mind the load of terror laid on it through his childish years.

He hated and feared his father still. Estrild had come to him like a beam of light in a dark place, and he had learned to hunger and thirst for her presence as a prisoner in his dungeon pines for the sun; to see her, to hear her voice, to hold her hand, had been temptations he had not strength to resist, hence he had fallen into the net spread for him, and he had dragged Estrild into the toils also.

In the first agony of his remorse he had broken his crystals and destroyed manuscripts that had cost him years of toil.

The great solace of his life was gone; but he could never again be tempted to wile Estrild to his room with promises of revealing to her the distant and the unknown.

In the anguish of his soul and the weariness of his flesh his power deserted him. Human love had crept into his heart and filled up every avenue of thought; and the occult, the mysterious, the spiritual dwellers of his mind found no place of rest. They fled before the tide of his passion, and left him room to perish in its flood.

A month passed by, each day filled with a gloomier despair. He knew that Estrild was ill, almost unto death; but he never saw her or asked to see her.

He heard of her from Carrie, who, sometimes contemptuous, sometimes kind, and at all times afraid of him with that sort of fear which repelled all confidence, came to his room with a book or a newspaper, or to talk of Tom.

This was his only glimpse of the outside world; to the rest of the household he was as a forgotten piece of lumber that had been thrust out of sight years before, to pass utterly from memory.

One day his door was opened gently, and, looking up with the unexpectant gaze of one who was hopeless of pleasure or change, he saw Estrild standing on the threshold.

The dull book he was striving to read, dropped from his hand, a flush rose to his brow, and his quivering lips refused to give him speech.

Estrild was like the shadow of herself; her once bright color was gone, her cheeks were pale and sunken, her hands hung by her side pale and lifeless.

"Are you shocked to see me so changed?" she asked, coming towards him. "But I am getting well now."

"You look very ill," he answered, gazing into her face hungrily. "Estrild can you forgive me? It is my fault that you have suffered so deeply."

"How can it be your fault? You did but show me the truth."

"Can we be sure it was the truth?" he said hesitatingly.

"Do not shake my belief now," she answered. "I am calmer, more resigned, since I have ceased to doubt—since I can no longer hope and wonder, and *pray* for the surety that he is either dead or living. If he were living, would he leave me in anguish through these long months of silence? Oh, no; it was a true vision! And I recognized the ship—it was the same in which I saw him the first time I looked into that strange crystal."

She glanced round her as if searching for it, and for a moment Gilbert regretted its destruction.

He gazed into her face with sad, wistful eyes, longing passionately, at any cost to hold her hand, to press his lips upon it once more.

"I have broken the crystal," he said, with a great sigh, "I can never call a vision into it again; and, Estrild, remember this, it was you who saw what was shadowed forth in it; I saw only you!"

She answered but the first of his speech, as if not hearing the last words.

"I am sorry you have broken it, though not for my own sake. I would not look into it again, for, though you tell me these wonders are all of the world, nature's secrets drawn from her great laboratory—yet it is wise for some not to peer into them."

"You were frightened," Gilbert said anxiously; "and I am to blame. The temptation to be near you was too strong for me. Oh, Estrild, let me confess——"

"No, no; I will hear no confessions," she cried hurriedly; "and I ask you as a kindness to speak of the matter no more."

He drew a breath of relief, he was spared the humiliating task he had set himself. His confession would have startled Estrild, though it was not an avowal of the love she had never guessed which he hid. And now seeing him pale and troubled, she felt sorry for him.

"Do not distress or blame yourself on my account," she said; "it was no foolish horror of the supernatural that caused my illness; you must remember what the vision was that I beheld. It was a funeral, in that lay the shock for me."

She paused a moment, clasping her hands together nervously.

Gilbert lowered his eyes, not daring to look into her face. What did their coverings hide? Was it jealousy or compunction?

"And you had told me," she continued, "that the crystal could but mirror an actual fact, a living thing passing on the earth, and painted by some curious means yet unknown by the light. And it was possible to convey a reflection of the sun-picture into the crystal, by the light also, through a power which which you have learned to use. For the dominion over every secret of nature is given to man, you have said, if he would but seek for this instead of groveling in the earth for gold."

"I have spoken truly—the perfect man shall have dominion over earth and air and sky, and death shall be trampled down beneath his feet."

A momentary exaltation raised his lowered eyes and filled them with the great triumph of life.

"And you have told me that sound also can be conveyed from unknown distances. I do not understand what you have said, but I have believed, and so I saw and heard what was passing perchance a thousand miles away, and I know that Harold is dead."

Again there was a moment's silence, and Gilbert leaned forward and hid his face on his hands.

She came and stood before him, white as a lily, and as lovely: her breath fell on him as though a honeysuckle had touched his brow, her low sweet voice melted his very heart within him.

"Harold is dead," she repeated, "and I have come, Gilbert, to say that I will be your wife."

His hands dropped down, and he looked up with eyes that blazed and cheeks covered with a hectic fire.

"Not for the infamous words my father has said!" he cried. "Estrild, do you think me a demon that I should take advantage of your innocence to accept such a sacrifice at your hands?"

"Stop! You do not know what I am offering," she said. "It is no sacrifice; except Pleasance, I have no relative in the world but you; to devote myself to you two will give me something to live for. Your life is valuable—you have fathomed secrets that might the change the destiny of nations; mine is worthless, and I think, as Mr. Vicat says, that I shall not live long."

"Estrild!" he exclaimed holding out his hands to her wildly.

She set them gently aside, and went on in the same low voice.

"Let me save your life, Gilbert, for the world. Here in this lonely room of sickness you have toiled and suffered through the nights and days of many weary years. Shall I stand by in the selfishness of my own pain to see all that labor lost? No, I cannot do that; in happier circumstances, in a sunnier clime, you will regain health, and your researches, your great discoveries, will bless the world. What am I compared with the welfare of a world? Shall I, a mere girl, dare to weigh myself in the balance against the happiness of millions? Gilbert, it is not of me you must think, but of the secrets of science that you possess, the power you hold to lessen human misery. It is for this you must live, and your name will go down with blessings to nations unborn."

She raised her great gray eyes upwards, filled with the light of enthusiasm, not seeing that the man trembling before her had lost his philosophy and his lore, and felt his universe only in her.

"Estrild, you do but dream!" he said sadly, hiding as best he could the heavings of his mighty sorrow.

"Listen, then, and I will tell you what my dream is. I will use my riches to restore you to health. I will have a ship fitted like a palace, and you, and I, and Pleasance will sail in it to the sunniest seas that run around the world. We will land here and there on the isles, and gather flowers like children, and sail away again. Oh, I know what will give you strength and health! Your father, you see, has told me, and the physician he brought to me said the same—a long sea-voyage is the great remedy—the true remedy, he said. And he left me, Gilbert, feeling glad of heart that I could yet do some good with my poor life. He spoke too of your wonderful discoveries, and the marvels you might bring to success if you had but hope and energy."

"Do you mean that my father spoke of them?" Gilbert asked, with a flush in his eyes, interrupting her unwillingly, for her words poured over him like music, though he knew they were but a dream.

"Yes, your father."

"Then, Estrild, I must speak the truth, even if I die for it by lingering on here in my prison-house. My father spoke only for his own purpose to rouse within your soul a high motive for self-sacrifice. He has no belief in his own words; his contempt for me would be boundless if it were not mingled with a little fear, for he half thinks me a sorcerer."

"All the more reason," she answered, "that I should rescue you from his sneers and help you to prove him wrong."

"Oh, Estrild, Estrild, you maddea me! I cannot—I dare no take you at your word! Look at me, and see whether it be pos.ible

that I could link such a life as mine with yours."

He spoke bitterly, and with a passion so intense that his lips grew white as his words passed through them; yet she could not see that this meant love.

"Is it not because you and I are alike—both withered?" she said, still with that quiet compassion in her voice which had moved her all through. "Is it not because of the bitterness in our two lives that I am able to offer you what I could offer no other—my help, my companionship, and the aid of my wealth? I am not offering love, Gilbert. I have none to give—you know that"—and a faint color touched her cheeks and fled—"neither am I asking for it. I ask only that you will give me the power to help you through a right all men men acknowledge—the right bestowed by the marriage ceremony."

"Oh, I have understood you!" he answered bitterly. "How could such as I misunderstand?"

There was a world of meaning in his mournful words; they showed that he knew himself outside the pale of human love.

Estrild stood by his side silent; she felt dimly the shadow of some terrible truth which her mind could not grasp, could not even guess at.

How could she comprehend that she was giving him gall to drink as she hung him on the cross of her great pity?

"You have not answered me," she said in a moment, in her sweet pitiful voice.

"Estrild, you are offering me money—nothing but money! and, to induce me to accept it, you propose to chain your young life to——"

She interrupted him hurriedly.

"You shall not speak of yourself in cruel words," she said; "and, if I offer money, it is for noble ends—it means for you name and fame and power to do good beyond your dreams."

For an instant, as through a long vista, he beheld glorious possibilities; he saw the face of a changed world, he saw health and happiness in the old dwellings of misery, he saw his name written in light, and heard blessings called down upon his memory.

But the vision faded, and the temptation that, like a mighty wind, had swayed his longing soul, passed away, leaving him only the still small voice of conscience.

He rose, and turned away his eyes resolutely from the sweet pale face of the woman who had pleaded with him for his own sake.

"Estrild, I cannot do this thing. You weigh down the world, you weigh down the millions that live and the millions yet to live. There is no good I could do to them that would counterbalance the evil done to you."

"There would be no evil done to me," she interposed eagerly.

"Yes, there would be evil past remedy. You will live to know that grief does not last forever. You will love again; you will marry and be happy."

A deep and sudden flush rose from chin to brow as she turned to the door to leave him.

"You wrong me; all the love I had is gone down into the sea. And, even if Harold lived, I could not be his wife. My promise to my brother forbids it. My wealth and the companionship of my wrecked life are all my dead brother and my dead love leave me to bestow; and it is only to you I could offer these, because you have no need of love. You care for a whole world, not for a solitary woman; and I thought you would accept my poor gifts, and give me in return the joy of knowing that I had saved you to bless the world that now wrongs and scorns you."

There were tears in her eyes, but she went away without another word, closing the door on his solitude and his pain.

"Is there any scorn equal to her scorn, which calls itself pity?" he said, as his head drooped upon his hands and tears fell between his thin fingers, fell upon his broken dreams, his shattered hopes, fell fast like bitter rain, and yet could not quench the fiery longing of his heart for one word, one touch of love.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MR. VICAT was triumphant.

"Six months ago," he said to his wife "you declared the marriage I proposed to bring about was impossible. Well, it is all settled now, and will take place to-morrow. Gilbert has given in at last. As I always foretold, Estrild was easily managed; he was the difficult one."

"I will never pray against your schemes again, Mr. Vicat, if that wedding is carried out to-morrow."

"Thank you, my dear. I must inform you also that the ship is ready in which the romantic couple are to sail round the world. She is fitted up splendidly, and is a perfect show on the Thames."

Mrs. Vicat gathered herself together with a slight shudder.

"Then I presume all the deeds are signed which settle things to your satisfaction?" she observed, with shaking lips.

"What do you mean by that question?" asked Mr. Vicat savagely. "Before a marriage, settlements are necessary, and, being of age, Estrild has done as she pleased—she has made a fair settlement."

"Is your name in it, Mr. Vicat?"

"Naturally it is," he answered, in the same tone. "I am her uncle and nearest relative, so, with the exception of a handsome sum given to Miss Glendorgal, the property devolves on me when the young couple——"

"Are dead or—or, let us say, drowned."

"You shall say nothing of the kind," said Mr. Vicat fiercely. "You impugn the soundness of the ship, which is as fine a clipper as ever sailed."

"Then God give her a prosperous voyage!" said Mrs. Vicat.

"You are an infernal woman!" responded her husband, as a slight whiteness gathered about his lips. "You always succeed in planting a sting in my most successful plans. And you have again passed the line forbidden to you. I'll have no such talk as that in my hearing."

He stalked away in anger, and Mrs. Vicat burst into tears.

"Thank goodness Carrie is coming home to-day!" she said, as her sobs subsided.

For nearly three months Carrie had been in the country, staying with Tom's father and mother; but for this last, Mr. Vicat perhaps had not been quite so successful. Yet the warfare between him and his son had been long and desperate.

It was a battle of the strong against the weak, waged unscrupulously, in which no expedient was left untried which could bring him victory.

Oftentimes in the darkness of the night the children who slept near Gilbert's rooms would start up in their beds and listen, trembling, to the loud sound of their father's voice.

Then they heard words and menaces that made their young spirits quail, and, holding each other's hands, they would ask in whispers what their strange wizard-brother had done to cause such anger.

All this was unguessed at and unheard by Estrild, for her rooms were far away on the other side of the large house; and, when she paid her visits of compassion to her cousin, feelings that may be imagined held him silent.

To her he only appeared weaker, paler, more exhausted every day, thus increasing her pity till she grew feverish and impatient in her longing to rescue and help him.

To her also it did but seem that his resistance weakened with his own weakness, and that at last he yielded even gladly to her generous wish to take upon herself a legal right to use her wealth to the saving of his life.

When he had once yielded, a fevered light shone again in his eyes, a color touched his cheeks, a mad hope breathed within him.

It was the hope of a quiet death, far from these scenes of misery, these sounds of threats—a quiet death rocked on a sunny sea, with Estrild's hand in his, and Estrild's eyes, divinely kind, guessing his secret at last, and looking into his with the pity the angels feel for genius wasted and love given in vain.

* * * * * *

"Well," exclaimed Carrie, "so this is the gunpowder-plot father has been concocting in my absence! Did I not warn you, Estrild, that when he was most smooth and kind and insinuating he was at his worst tricks? Why have you allowed yourself to be taken in?"

"I am not taken in that I am aware of, Carrie. It is in my power to save your brother's life—a life of infinite value; and your father has shown me that I can do it only by calling myself his wife."

"And by legally endowing him and father with your money," said Carrie, in breathless indignation. "But of what use is it to you? You are one person, and I am another. I am commonplace, and you are romantic. And in your romance you are doing a thing that I suppose fools would call generous, but which I call idiotic, if not wicked!"

"Carrie, you are going too far!" Estrild cried angrily.

"Well, it is wicked to give in to father's plots, not knowing the meaning and end of them. However, I shall set to work to fathom them. And what does Miss Glendorgal say to this scheme? Does she go with you?"

"No; I did not think it right to ask her, as she disapproved so much of it. She cannot judge truly, not knowing Gilbert."

"Ah, but she knows you!" returned Carrie snappishly. "And she ought to have come to town, and stopped this plot."

Later on that evening Carrie went out alone, leaving Tom and Tom's father, who had escorted her back to London, to be entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Vicat.

"So your son is going to be married?" observed the old gentleman in an astonished voice. "I thought he was a hopeless invalid."

"Oh, there are chances of life for him with a sea-voyage and a warm climate; and my niece is resolved to devote her fortune to his restoration, and proposed to accompany him! But I could not permit her to compromise herself in that way, so I have consented to her idea of a romantic marriage. She is to be a sort of sister of mercy to him."

"Oh, indeed!" returned Tom's father. "Let us hope then that he will get well again."

"And, if he does," resumed Mr. Vicat, with an odd smile, "we shall hear great things of him. Through his wife's large fortune he will have a chance now to carry out his experiments and prove himself a wizard indeed."

"Ah, I have heard he can do very queer things!"

"He frightens us all at times," said Mrs. Vicat uneasily.

"But what he does now is nothing to what he will do when he gets time, health, and money," continued her husband, with the same smile and inward enjoyment of his own words. "Bless you, he is going to send messages round the world upon wires, and make boats that will sail under water; he is going to hold conversation with folk a hundred miles off, and carry food in a small bottle in his pocket which will last thirty days. It will be convenient—all that—won't it?"

Tom's father, who was a pious old gentleman, looked grave.

"It is more than St. Peter or St. Paul ever did or tried to do," he said.

"Surely your son does not set himself up above the apostles—he can't mean he'll work greater miracles than they did!"

"But Gilbert declares they are not miracles—they are all natural things," said Mrs. Vicat, always with the same uneasiness in her tone, the same anxious glances at her husband.

"Natural! Oh, no! A man in all his senses can't believe that. But perhaps the poor fellow is a little queer in his head, ma'am."

"You have hit the mark," returned Mr. Vicat, with a coarse laugh. "Gilbert is a little mad upon his inventions."

"But some of them are pretty remarkable," observed Tom; "and, if he is right in his theories, I believe they could be worked with success."

"'If' is a mighty big word," said Mr. Vicat. "At all events, his philosophy, whether mad or sane, has got him an heiress, and there's an end for the present. Let us wish him joy!"

Mr. Vicat had introduced the conversation for his own purposes, and his wife knew it.

In her secret soul she felt he was acting a part which he would require to have remembered in his favor one day.

Carrie's entrance was a relief to her, and also to Tom, whose mental discomfort had been nearly as visible as her own.

The girl was joyous, and carried a laugh in either eye which was pretty to see.

"Well, Carrie, is it all right?" whispered Tom.

"Right as a thread and true as gold."

* * * * * *

It was the wedding morning, and Estrild sat in her room dressed and calm.

There was but a slight misgiving at her heart—planted there by Carrie—and she shrank from analysing it, as she felt such a misgiving was selfish.

In her intense girlish ignorance, she deemed that her life could not be better spent than in devoting it as nurse and sister to the unhappy cousin whose genius now was occupied by sickness and poverty.

Still she wished she could have carried out her generous design without marriage; but Mr. Vicat had not only declared this a necessity, but had refused his consent to any other scheme she had proposed.

"I am your guardian, and I won't let you waste money on a cousin, though you may on a husband. That would be justifiable, and the world would not blame me for allowing it. As it is, my duty is clear. I will not permit you to lavish money or lose your character for a cousin. I don't permit you to leave this house with him except as his wife."

Shut away from the outside world, weakened by illness, and filled with despair by the deaths of those she loved, and looking forward to the loneliness and uselessness of her own life with mute hopelessness, it was no wonder she yielded to Mr. Vicat's specious arguments without understanding their iniquity.

Unable to consult with any one, lonely and friendless in dreary London, and completely in his power, as some say is a young girl in the hands of a subtle priest who avails himself maybe of some youthful bitterness to persuade her to give her dowry to a convent and immure herself within its walls, a prisoner for life.

In this case it was through the utter weariness of a broken heart that a cruel scheme succeeded.

The door opened and Estrild started up, expecting to see Mr. Vicat's smooth face; but it was Carrie who entered, followed by a young girl so slight that she seemed a child, and yet with the earnest face of a steadfast woman.

"This is my friend Mary Armstrong," said Carrie.

Estrild looked at her with patient meek eyes.

Once she would have been angry at the sound of her name; now it mattered little whether they were friends or enemies. So she let Mary take her cold lifeless hand and kneel down by her side and look up into her face pleadingly.

"Carrie tells me you are in sorrow and great trouble," she said; "and I know something of sorrow too. I have lost a father and you a brother."

"Is it right you should mention him to me?" Estrild asked, striving to release her hand from Mary's clasp.

"Yes, it is right, for your brother's death led to my father's—so we are sisters in sorrow."

"Your father lost his life in screening an assassin."

"No!" Mary exclaimed eagerly. "Why do you blind yourself to the truth? Your brother died as all your family die—by an accident brought about by mysterious means beyond our ken."

"So let it be then," Estrild answered hopelessly. "I have ceased to fight against the inevitable. I am the last of my race—the only one left now to be the victim of a fiend!"

Mary shuddered at these words; through her clasping arms Estrild felt the shiver that passed through her frame.

"You know not what you say, you know not what you do. I come to entreat you to save yourself from misery. This cruel marriage must not take place."

"Why not?" asked Estrild. "Will you tell me what better thing I can do with my life than save a better and nobler life, a thousand times nobler, than my own?"

"You would not save it. Your cousin cannot live; and your marriage would be a ghastly slavery for you if he did, and a mockery for him."

Estrild's bosom heaved, but she did not answer.

"I would have brought Mary here sooner," said Carrie, who stood by the door, as if listening for steps she feared, "but she has been in Cumberland for many months. All this has happened since I left home. I am sure father steals her letters."

"Who is there to write to me but Pleasance?" Estrild asked, in the same sad way. "You see, if you take from me the hope of saving my cousin, you steal my last glimmer of joy."

"Have you no one else to live for? Where is your lover?" asked Mary.

"Dead."

And, except that Estrild's face grew paler, there was no change in voice or manner as she spoke.

"He died in striving to solve the mystery of my brother's death—he died for my sake!"

"Did you not see the inquest in the papers?" asked Carrie. "He was found drowned in the Thames. But through some glamour of Gilbert's, one of his wizard tricks, I think, Estrild will not believe it; she persists in imagining he was on board some great ship——"

"And is still living?" interrupted Mary eagerly.

"No; for, even if he was on board some ship, through Gilbert again, Estrild imagined she received proofs of his death."

"Is that true?" asked Mary.

Estrild turned her sad eyes on her without reply—they spoke without words.

"Carrie, I should like to see Gilbert," said Mary.

"Then you must go alone," returned Carrie, "for I am too angry to speak to him."

Mary went, and returned in a short time flushed and pitiful. Then she wished Estrild good-bye hurriedly, and went away with Carrie, not having said another word against the strange marriage.

In the little dark parlor which Carrie called her own room these two conferred earnestly together, and Mary gave a letter into her hands.

"If things happen that we fear, let her have it to comfort and help her," she said. "Carrie, we must hurry now—the time is short."

Carrie, apparently without reason, burst into tears and sobbed pitifully.

"Do you repent your promise?" asked Mary, laying her small hand on her shoulder.

"Repent? No; I am saving mother from misery and shame; I am saving the little ones—and I hope I am saving father from the gallows;" concluded Carrie, with a flash of anger lighting up her tears.

"Do not say that, Carrie. Our fears and suspicions may be all groundless. You will be glad to prove them so."

"I believe what Tom says—that the captain of that ship is a desperate man, ready for any deed of crime; and his wife is worse than himself."

"We have both believed Tom; Carrie, there is no more time for talk."

Carrie hurried away to her mother's room, and astonished the tribe of children she met on the stairs by catching each one in her arms and giving him a good hug before setting him down again on his noisy feet.

She found her mother in bed, knitting vigorously with fast and shaking fingers.

"I can't get up, Carrie, my dear, for if I should fall on my knees and pray, and your father would be dreadfully angry. Hush, he is in his room dressing, and the door is not quite shut!"

"Never mind him, mother. Pray always with heart and soul, pray night and day, mother, and put my name in your prayers too. Now give me a good kiss, for I am going—going out for a little while."

"Are you, my dear? Well, I don't wonder at that."

"Mother, promise me you won't wonder at anything I do—promise me you will feel it to be kind and right, or you will know I should not do it."

"I always know that, Carrie."

And so they kissed each other, and, with a long last look at her mother, Carrie was gone; and in another minute she and Mary Armstrong were walking rapidly down a side-street where a carriage awaited them.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE Princess of Wales is always to be found on the side of common sense, and in having her daughters taught the complete art of dress-making has set an example which ought to be widely followed by women to whom it must be of much greater consequence. The Princess herself is known to be completely up both in theory and practice, and this is the great reason why she is so perfectly dressed and why her dressmakers find her so difficult to satisfy with anything short of the best cut and workmanship.

A MAN may be learned in the wisdom of the ancients, may inherit a vast amount of scientific and literary knowledge, and yet be greatly inferior to any one of those from whom he has gleaned and over whom he vainly plumes himself. It is only the fresh and earnest thinker who is able vitally to comprehend the thought of another; and no lapse of time or progress of attainment can ever suffice to put a great mind within the compass and grasp of a small one.

THE thunder of great words does not always betoken a great thought, for many a grand salute is fired with a blank cartridge.

THE VOWS OF MEN.

BY T. HAYNES BAYLY.

Write on the sand when the tide is low;
Seek the spot when the waters flow;
Whisper a name when the storm is heard;
Pause that the echo may catch the word.

If that you wrote on the sand should last—
If echo is heard 'mid the tempest's blast,
Then believe, and not till then,
That there's truth in the vows of men.

Throw a rose on the stream at morn;
Watch at eve for the flower's return;
Drop in the ocean a golden grain;
Hope 'twill shine on the shore again.

If the rose you again behold—
If you gaze on your grain of gold,
Then believe, and not till then,
There is truth in the vows of men.

IN THE PAST.

BY C. HADDON CHAMBERS.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER a walk of a very few minutes they arrived at Mr. Carson's abode—one of a row of old houses which, fifty or sixty years ago, had been aristocratic mansions.

A latch-key admitted them. A candle was found on the hall-table; then three flights of stairs, and they were in Mr. Carson's rooms.

The host proceeded immediately to make his guest comfortable.

He lighted the fire in the small, unpretentious, but cozy sitting-room, and put on a little tin kettle, made Frank take off his coat, which was damp, and don a dressing-gown, and placed him near the fire.

"You are strangely good to me," remarked Frank, gratefully.

"Good!" replied Mr. Carson, busy preparing the coffee-pot, and taking a decanter of spirits from the cupboard. "Nothing of the kind! A little strange, perhaps. You see, Dewar, I have lived much alone. My mother died when I was quite a youngster, and I was left without money, relations or friends. I was brought up to the stage, and have fought my way upwards until I now hold a first rate position, considering my age; and I am not so much your senior as you might suppose. But the world has an ageing effect, and I have lived in the world all my life."

"I cannot understand your interest in me," said Frank.

"You love your mother," replied Mr. Carson, after a somewhat lengthy pause. "When you sang that last ballad I was sitting in the shadow by the piano, and saw your emotion; although," he hastened to add, as he saw the young man start uneasily, "no one else did. And I love, I worship my mother's memory. That should establish a bond of sympathy between us. Then, too, you are beginning your fight with the world and fortune; the same fight that I have had, and am still in the thick of. If we are not equal to throwing a look or word of sympathy to a companion in the conflict, heaven pity us. But the kettle's boiling," he cried, suddenly breaking off. "Now I want you to have a cup of coffee before you turn in."

Frank gratefully accepted and drank the refreshment offered him. But he was now very weary.

Mr. Carson's watchful eye saw that he could scarce hold his head up.

"You're sleepy, I see," he said. "I'm glad I'm not, for I must sit up now until rehearsal at 11 o'clock this morning, studying a new part. You must turn into my bedroom and do the sleeping for me."

"No, indeed," cried Frank, starting into wakefulness. "I couldn't think of such a thing as depriving you of your bed. If you will allow me to doze in this chair, or ——"

"My dear fellow," interrupted Carson, "you are too sleepy to be logical. Why should the bed—small, but not uncomfortable—in the next room remain unoccupied when there is a man in this room half dead with fatigue. I must sit up and study this part. If you don't use the bed no one will. There; take this candle, and be off with you. We'll have a chat to-morrow. Good-night, and pleasant dreams!"

Frank shook his host's hand silently, but the silence was more eloquent than speech.

As he stretched his weary limbs under the bed-clothes he thought of his mother, and of his newly-found friend. He remembered the good and forgot the evil, and in a few moments he slept.

Left alone, Mr. Carson sat gazing dreamily into the fire. He had nothing to study.

He knew his part in the play that was to be rehearsed that day, perfectly.

The fire glowed upon a comely face, old beyond the years it had seen, but attractive even in its seriousness.

There was something in it that said "I have endured;" there was earnestness and power too, and more than the most thoughtful observer could read in a casual glance.

"Frank Dewar," murmured Mr. Carson, thoughtfully. "Strange that I should have taken a fancy to a Dewar. I daresay the name is common enough though. He's a nice boy and I believe there is good in him. He may do good for himself and the world—depends, I should think, upon how the world treats him, for he's proud and headstrong, and wants ballast, I fancy. I wonder now whatever made him leave home."

And still wondering, Mr. Carson dozed off into dreamland.

When Frank woke from the deep, refreshing sleep which had kindly visited him, he was startled to see, by a little carriage clock upon the dressing-table, that it was exactly midday.

Springing out of bed, he began to dress; and then he lighted upon a little note which was stuck in the looking-glass. It said:

"Dear Dewar,—I shall run off to rehearsal and leave you to sleep it out. I shall return about two. In the meantime make yourself as happy as you can. Summon breakfast, about which I have left orders, by pulling the bell at the sitting-room fireplace. Books, writing materials, etc., are in the sitting-room. In fine make the best of the den till I return. Then we will chat.

Yours, JOHN CARSON."

"John Carson is like one of the genii we read of in fairy tales," soliloquized Frank, warmly. "As good as he is mysterious. Strange that one finds good where it is least expected. Carson is a million times the superior of the fellows I called my friends; and yet I never thought his acquaintance worth cultivating. What is the old cynical proverb? 'Go to strangers for charity, to friends for advice, and to relations for nothing.'"

In an hour he had bathed, dressed and breakfasted, and then he spent the time until his kind host returned in looking out on the square, and trying to plan out his future.

"Well," said Carson, as he entered the room, "how do you find yourself? I hope you haven't been very dull, caged up here alone."

"Indeed, I've not, for I've been thinking of your kindness," replied Frank, gracefully. "And I should like to try and thank you before I go."

"Kindness! Nonsense. But why talk of going so soon."

"Well, I mustn't repeat last night's mistake. You know I must find lodgings; and in any case I don't wish to take advantage of your good nature by lingering here."

"I've thought of rooms for you," replied Mr. Carson. "And if you don't require anything particularly luxurious you might be suited in this house."

"On the contrary: I want something particularly cheap. Until I can earn a little money by writing, which I hope to be able to do, I must live as inexpensively as a Chinaman, for I have only three or four pounds in the world," acknowled Frank, candidly.

"Then the room overhead will suit you admirably. It is very small, and very elevated; but it is neat and light, and has a pleasant outlook—just the very roost for an embryo author. By the way, if your genius leans in that direction, I may be of use to you, in the way of finding a market for your work. And in return I will ask a favor of you. It is that you will use this sitting-room with me."

"But," interrupted Frank, coloring, "I ——"

"It is a selfish request," pursued Mr. Carson, seriously. "I find the hours I spend at home very lonely sometimes. A chum to exchange thoughts and ideas with would brighten them immensely. If you grant me this favor, I in return, will teach you the first principles of bachelor economy. There; let us consider that point as settled. Now you had better be presented to that garrulous autocrat, the landlady."

The afternoon was spent in carrying out these arrangements—a servant being sent to the club for Frank's portmanteau—and the evening, after dinner, in discussing the young man's prospects and reading the small literary efforts he had brought with him from home.

These latter, like the first-fruits of many authors, were better in expression than in substance, and Mr. Carson held that to be a promising sign.

Frank's work was unaffected and bright, pointed and direct.

Whether expressing humor or sentiment, the manner was equally happy, although, truth to tell, the matter was often stale and unprofitable.

Mr. Carson, who, though a kindly, was an honest critic, pointed this out, but justly ascribed it to youth and inexperience.

"You will do," he said, "when you have learned a little more of life. If you have patience and perseverance, I firmly believe that, when you know as much of the world as I do, you will make your mark as an author."

Frank set to his work with perseverance and determination.

He wrote for several hours daily, and, although he experienced the usual hopes, fears and disappointments of the young author, he did not permit them to seriously affect his spirits or his industry.

His manuscripts came back, and he grew somewhat nervous of the postman's knock; but the work was immediately sent off again elsewhere, and more was written.

At last there came to him his first success; and he experienced in their proper order that trio of blissful circumstances and sensations which no author, no matter to what eminence he may subsequently rise, can ever entirely forget.

In his first good fortune, as in his trouble, he had only two sympathetic friends; but as their sincerity was unimpeachable, they were a host in themselves.

They were Mr. Carson and his dear mother.

Within a few days of leaving home he had redeemed the promise he had made his mother—that he would contrive to see her soon.

One evening, after a hard day's work, he walked up to Hampstead. His intention was to go to the back of the house, and entrust one of the servants with a secret message to his mother; but as he walked softly through the garden he noticed that the blinds of the room in which they were accustomed to pass the evening were not down.

Looking in, he saw his father and mother occupied as usual, the first with the *Times*, and the latter with a piece of embroidery. Stepping back into the darkness among the shrubs, Frank softly whistled the air of his favorite song.

He saw his mother look up at once, glance at the window, then at her husband, and then resume her work.

But presently she rose, laid her work down, and with apparent unconcern walked from the room.

In a few moments he heard her voice, eager but subdued, in the garden. "Frank; are you there?" Another moment and he was in her arms.

They had but a few minutes together, for Mrs. Dewar feared that her husband would miss her and suspect the meeting; but Frank had time to tell his story, omitting the unpleasant and dwelling only on the brighter details—his work, his hopes of success, his new friend, and the comfort of his lodging.

In return, Mrs. Dewar could only tell him that his father was more irritable than ever, and that she had been forbidden to hold any communication with her banished son.

Soon they were obliged to part, and when she hurried away Frank found that his mother had left a little money in his hand. Remembering his father's illiberality, he knew how she must have scraped and saved to secure it for him.

After that Frank saw his mother once every week—sometimes in the afternoon when she was alone, and sometimes in the evening.

He wrote often to her, too, posting his letters in the morning early so that she would receive them when his father was absent; and he had the proud satisfaction of sending her his first printed work, and of afterwards listening to her warm praises thereof.

One afternoon Mr. Carson and Frank were out walking together, when the former, who was unusually preoccupied and sad, proposed a visit to Brompton Cemetery.

"If you would care to," he said, "we will go to my mother's grave. I go very frequently, but hitherto always alone. I should like to take you, however, because there is so much sympathy between us. We are now almost brothers — almost brothers."

And then, as they walked on, Mr. Carson talked, as people in sadness are apt to do, with more personal confidence than he had ever done before.

He spoke of his mother, and told Frank how just before his birth she had abandoned the stage, which various family circumstances led her to adopt, and by so doing sacrificed a career which had been full of great promise: and he conveyed the impression that her short life had been full of trouble, and her death a happy release.

It was a simple gravestone that they stood before, after half-an-hour's walk—simple and unpretending.

Indeed it seemed to shrink from observation behind the larger and handsomer monuments which half surrounded it. It bore this plain inscription:

Sacred to the Memory of
ROSE CARSON.
Aged 32.

As the two young men stood, talking slowly in subdued tones, a man appeared before them, so suddenly that he seemed to start up from the ground.

It was Mr. Dewar, his face pale, and his hands trembling.

"What do you here?" he asked, addressing Frank with mingled anger and agitation.

"Father!" ejaculated Frank, retreating a step in surprise at the unexpectedness of the meeting.

"What do you here?" demanded Mr. Dewar again, in the same voice.

The reply came from Carson. He too had grown pale, and he stood looking strangely at Frank's father.

"He came with me," he said quietly. "I brought him here."

Mr. Dewar's eyes turned to Carson's face, and fastened there—dilated, inquiring, and wild—as if they would never leave it.

"And you?" he asked; "why have you come?"

"To visit my mother's grave."

The two men stood looking at each other in silence for a few moments, with faces paler than before—their very lips were white. Something strange was working in each man's breast.

"Your mother? Which——"

Carson, without moving his eyes, pointed to the little gravestone.

Mr. Dewar shook visibly.

"And—your father?" he asked, in a hoarse whisper, and as if impelled by an unseen power.

"His name," replied Carson, slowly, "was Henry Carson."

Mr. Dewar staggered as though he had received a blow; but as the two young men stepped forward to his assistance he waved them off with one hand, with the other grasping for support the high railings round an adjacent grave.

Then he appeared to recover himself somewhat, and, with bowed head and short unsteady steps, he walked away, and out of their sight.

"What does it mean, Carson?" asked Frank, wonderingly, and not quite grasping the truth.

"It means strange things," replied his friend, passing his hand over his eyes. "It means, Frank, that I was nearer the truth than I imagined when I said, as we came along, that we are 'almost brothers.'"

CHAPTER III.

A HEAVY hand was laid upon John Dewar. Twenty-four hours after the scene at Rose Carson's grave, he was stricken down with brain fever, and for several weeks he lay tossing in delirium and hovering between life and death. The doctors shook their heads and looked very grave.

It was evident, they said, that their patient had been overburdened with mental distress for some considerable time. He was at an age, too, when men of fine constitution, who have lived too freely in their youth, apparently with impunity, frequently collapse with terrific suddenness. Nature demands her revenge at last, and the forfeit must be paid.

They found that their patient's heart was weak, and that his lungs were none too sound; and Mrs. Dewar was gently told to be prepared for the worst.

Under these circumstances Frank, of course, spent the greater portion of his time at home.

His brother was traveling with his wife abroad, and, his present address being unknown, it was impossible to summon him.

It was to Frank alone that Mrs. Dewar could turn, in this terrible crisis, for sympathy, help and advice. She nursed her husband incessantly, untiringly, and with unspeakable patience and tenderness. A true woman's nature is very beautiful. In an hour of suffering she will forget twenty years of unkindness.

Frank was for sometime troubled in his mind as to whether he should mention to his mother the scene in the graveyard and the discoveries it had led to; but Carson, whom he consulted, decided for him.

"Say nothing," was his advice, "Remember that the secret is not your own."

When Mr. Dewar at last awoke to consciousness, his weakness was pitiable to behold, and there were still no hopes of his recovery. But the family constitution, although not robust, was remarkably wiry, and to the surprise of all Mr. Dewar by slow and almost imperceptible degrees began to mend; but it was only too apparent that he could never recover his former health and strength—that he would remain an invalid for the rest of his days.

"Your constitution must be marvellous, Dewar," remarked the family doctor, standing one day at his bedside. "I don't know another man who could have come through that illness as you have. It was the brain I feared most. You have been making too severe calls upon it—asking it to carry too much. A heavy weight upon it, eh? Have you been carrying it alone?"

The invalid nodded weakly.

"Then, my friend, you've been acting the fool," said the shrewd old doctor, bluntly. "and it has nearly cost you your life. Such burdens must be shared; then they grow lighter, and perhaps disappear together. You need not look far for one to confide in. Do you know who has been mainly instrumental in pulling you through this business? Your wife, sir, who has nursed you day and night, and whose tender care, under Providence, has won you back to life. Now take this advice, which is the best I have ever given you, and which has the additional advantage of being gratis: No matter what the trouble is, tell your wife. You will be astonished how much better you will feel after it."

"Tell your wife." The words rang in Mr. Dewar's ears after the doctor had gone, and opened up a train of thought entirely new to him.

"Tell his wife?" Such a proposition had never been made to him before; never had such an idea occurred to his mind. Before his illness he would have dismissed it as impossible and useless; but he was now weak and softened, and no longer strong to bear alone.

"Tell your wife." Over and over again the words repeated themselves in his brain. He tried to banish them.

He told himself that it was too late; that it could bring no peace; that it would only magnify the trouble, and be cruel to her. (Strange, John Dewar, that you are now considering your wife's feelings.) But the words refused to be banished. The idea had fastened upon him, and, unconsciously, it fascinated him.

When his wife came into the room shortly afterwards, his great hollow eyes followed her strangely, and she was quick to notice and wonder at it.

Twice, by an uncontrollable impulse, he called her; but when she came his weak courage failed, and he made some slight requests instead.

He had grown wonderfully observant, however; and he detected the tenderness in her voice; he saw the sympathy in her soft brown eyes; and he felt the grateful gentleness of her touch as she arranged the pillows.

For fully a week Mr. Dewar's mind was disturbed by the doctor's advice. He longed to put it to the practice, but his courage was still weak.

One day, however, he called her to his bedside, by an impulse which was backed

by some resolution. Quickly she came, but he was silent.

"What is it, John?"

He was still silent for a few moments, and then, gathering courage, but not looking at her, he said:

"You are very good, Mary."

The voice was low, and the words were spoken a little awkwardly; but the wife heard them, and trembled with a multitude of emotions.

For nearly a quarter of a century she had not heard such grateful, affectionate words from her husband's lips, and it is not wonderful that, hearing them all suddenly now, she could find no reply; but, gliding swiftly away out of his sight, she stood at the window, struggling with her tears.

For several minutes Mr. Dewar was uncertain as to the effect his words had produced; but all his uneasy doubts were dispelled when, returning to the bedside, his wife took the poor wasted white hand which lay upon the coverlet, kissed it gently, and retained it in her own.

In that moment John Dewar knew that the much that was to be forgiven him was forgiven freely.

She sat by his side, still holding his hand, silent, but very happy. After a while, he told her his story, bravely and truly, although his voice was unsteady and he looked away from her.

It required some courage to make that confession; but Mr. Dewar did not spare himself.

He began by telling her, in a few words, of the wildness of his youth; and then he proceeded at once to reveal the nature of the heartless sin which he had committed in the name of virtue, and for which he had suffered half a lifetime of remorse.

He spoke of his sister—that only sister, the mention of whose name he had ever hitherto avoided—the gentle girl whose natural and only protector he had been, through the early death of their parents.

Through all his most desperate wildness, the knowledge of which he had studiously kept from her, he loved her deeply. At nineteen she was beautiful, innocent and impressionable, and it was then that she met and returned the love of Henry Carson, the actor.

The brother was furious, and he stoutly forbade the lovers to meet. The inevitable result followed. There was an elopement, and a secret marriage.

He swore never to willingly look upon her face again. The letters which came addressed in her handwriting were promptly thrown into the fire, unopened. Afterwards he heard that Henry Carson was dying of consumption, and that his sister was appearing on the stage.

Still he kept his oath. After that he heard of the actor's death; and, a year later, there came a letter which, as it was not in his sister's handwriting, he opened.

It was from Rose, but written by her landlady. Would he come to her? She was in great distress and dying, and she had a child who would need a friend. No; he would not go to her.

He had cast her off, and all belonging to her, for ever. He would keep his oath. Then in the years that followed, remorse had crept into his heart.

For years he had tried vainly to forget that chapter in his life: but the voice of remorse refused to be silenced, and lately it had grown so loud that he had been impelled to inquire of her fate.

Then he had learned of her death, and after much difficulty he had found her burial-place.

Mr. Dewar stopped here. In his self-abasement he wondered that his wife still sat by him and still held his hand. He was afraid to look at her, lest he should see horror and disgust in her face.

But suddenly he felt a warm tear on his hand, and glancing at her he saw that she was weeping silently.

"How you must loathe me," he said.

"Indeed, John, I pity you so much—and her."

Then, after a pause, she went on:

"You must have suffered terribly all these years. Oh, had I but known, how much more patient and considerate I might have been!"

"Mary, don't speak so!" cried her husband. "You've been an angel to me, and I in return have made your life a miserable burden. I have driven your boy away."

"Hush, dear!" she said, rising and kissing his forehead. "It is all forgotten. We have been married anew to-day."

Then there was another silence, and Mr. Dewar, lying still, with moist eyes, marvelled greatly that he could have been so long blind to the blessing that lay ever within his grasp—that he could have dwelt miserably in the past, when the poignancy of recollection might have been soothed by the priceless blessings of a woman's love, sympathy and forgiveness.

The mother's instinct impelled Mrs. Dewar to ask one question.

"What of the child, John?" she inquired, gently.

Then he told her how his inquiries had failed to elicit any information on that subject, and of the strange meeting and discovery in the cemetery.

Mrs. Dewar became very agitated.

"It is the same!" she exclaimed, with much emotion. "He is Frank's friend; he has been very good to him. John, you must see this young man. It is his forgiveness that you must seek. After that, we will all forget the past."

* * * * * *

John Carson's forgiveness was not hard to obtain. On the following day he was closeted with the sick man for an hour, and when they parted there was no bitterness in either man's heart.

Frank and Carson, who still live together, and are making steady progress in their respective professions, often run down for a few days to Ilfracombe, whither Mr. and Mrs. Dewar have moved, by the doctor's advice.

John Dewar is a confirmed invalid, and his days cannot be long; but what he has lost in health and strength, he has gained in peace and happiness.

He has gained, too, in breadth of sympathy. Affliction, in his case, has cleared the moral vision. So great a failure himself, he has grown to look with more charity upon the failings of others.

In a word, he has caught, for the first time, a little of the true spirit of the teaching of that great Master whom he has so long professed to follow—Who hated the sin, but loved the sinner—the golden spirit of forbearance, tolerance, and eternal love.

His temper is still imperfect; he is especially irritable when his wife is away from him, even for an hour.

But when she is with him, his eyes rest upon her with the contentment of a child; and to himself he often murmurs thankfully: "Whereas I was blind, now I see."

[THE END.]

The Turquoise Ring.

BY E. S.

I HAVE been married nearly twenty years (said the man who told me this story), and Nellie, my darling wife, has won from me as true and loyal love as ever filled a man's heart, and yet Nellie never wore this ring, once the pledge of my betrothal.

It is a cheap affair—a forget-me-not in turquoise, with a very contemptible little spark of a diamond in the centre; but how hardly earned was the money that purchased it!

I remember Ralph Harmon asked me if I really intended to put "that thing" upon Jessie Reynolds's finger, and I smiled proudly, thinking my ring would be above price to her.

We were all at Glenwood that summer, Jessie visiting her aunt, Mrs. Glenn, who was a distant connection of Ralph's. I was taking holiday from the very humdrum occupation of clerk in a wholesale grocery shop.

Uncle Gregory had sent me to "make my own way," after giving me a good education and a small sum of money to start with; and I was making it, to the best of my ability.

Jessie was music-teacher in a city school, and we lodged at the same house. All winter we had been conjugating the verb "to love" in company, and in the spring she consented to be my wife, as soon as my salary was a trifle larger.

I had been a little jealous of Ralph Harmon before I won that promise, for he was wealthy, handsome, and most fascinating in address.

But when Jessie said she loved me, jealousy had no power to disturb my entire happiness.

It was a great event for Jessie to be invited to visit Mrs. Glenn, who was the "rich aunt" of the Reynolds family.

"I have always been poor," she said to me, frankly, "but I know I shall enjoy a peep into aristocratic circles, and a wee taste of a life of luxury and ease."

"Do not love it too well," I entreated, "or you may regret your promise to be a poor man's wife."

"Never!" she said, putting her hand in mine: "I can never regret my love for you."

As her vacation was for two months, mine for only two weeks, we agreed that my visit to Grenville, the village near Glenwood, should be postponed until the end of her stay, that we might return to the city together.

How long and dismal were those six weeks of separation, but they ended at last.

I was surprised, when leaving my own quarters at the Grenville Hotel to walk to Glenwood, I met Ralph driving a most stylish turn-out in the opposite direction.

"Get in," he said, "and I will take you over to Glenwood, where my cousin expects you."

"Your cousin?"

"Mrs. Glenn married my cousin, several times removed, but we consider ourselves cousins, I assure you."

And I found this was quite true. Mrs. Glenn, a widow of fifty or more, evidently enjoyed the many attentions of her handsome young nephew, and made him cordially welcome amongst her numerous guests.

Her house was very full, and there was an endless succession of amusements.

And Jessie, my Jessie, was a queen of the revels, and the favorite of all. I confess it annoyed me a little to see how handsomely she was dressed, but, as she said, Mrs. Glenn was her own aunt, and if she chose by presents to make her attire suit her surroundings, it was silly to refuse.

Was I a blind fool for still trusting her? It seems so now, but then I had not one fear of her fidelity in my heart.

Sometimes I caught Mrs. Glenn's eyes fixed upon me with a pitying expression; but I attributed it to Jessie's probable confidences concerning our mutual poverty.

It was the very last day of our stay, and Jessie was to return to the city by an early morning train.

There was a large farewell party to be given at Glenwood in the evening, and I was thinking of possible opportunities for a "long talk" as I packed my trunk.

"It will be very late when I come in," I said to myself, "and I'll have this all ready for that early train leaves at six."

Just at this point of my meditations, the waiter tapped at my door and handed in a note and a telegram.

The note was in Jessie's handwriting, and I tore that open first. From it rolled into the trunk I was packing the ring I had given her, but I did not heed it, as I read, "By the time this reaches you I shall have left Glenwood. Forgive me, if you can, when I tell you frankly I cannot endure the life of poverty before us, if we marry. Having tasted the delights of wealth, I cannot again resign them. I married Ralph Harmon this morning."

"Beg pardon, sir, but the boy is waiting for an answer to the telegram."

I opened it then. Only one line, signed by my uncle's physician: "Your uncle is dying! Come at once!"

It roused me from my stupor of despair.

"When is the next train?" I asked.

"5.30," was the reply.

I hastily scrawled an answer, "Will come as fast as possible!" and sent it off.

5.30, and it was then after five. I thrust my clothing into the half-packed trunk, sent it to the station, and followed it with haste.

I must return to the city to make a train to Eastown, and it would be morning before I could see my uncle, my best and only friend.

It was the last day of August, and oppressively hot.

As we sped over the iron road, the dust came in choking clouds around us, and even the absence of sunlight gave but little relief from the dreadful heat.

Everybody was grumbling, when half an hour's distance from the city, and nearly midnight, there was a crash, a horrible grinding noise, mingled with shrieks and groans, and the train stopped.

It was some moments before the extent of the horror before me could be realized. The two cars preceding the one I was in were telescoped by another train, and lay in ruins, the dead and dying crushed under the hideous debris on all sides.

Lanterns were secured, and the uninjured passengers worked manfully to aid in extricating such as were alive, and carrying the dead to a barn near the scene of the disaster.

Private trouble could not be remembered in the face of such appalling horror. I did not stop to think of poor Uncle Gregory, of my own wounded heart, as I carried one end of a litter to and fro between the railway and the farmhouses near at hand.

Morning found us still at work, every man for miles around helping to remove the wreck, to save life wherever it was possible.

It was sickening to see the crushed, maimed bodies of those who had been the day before strong and perfect, returning from summer holidays to the world's varied work-rooms.

I had forgotten my own identity almost, in my sorrow and sympathy, when a kindly hand was placed upon my arm, and a farmer, in his shirt sleeves, said—

"We've made coffee up at our house, and there's a sort of breakfast there. The women are all busy with the wounded, but we'll do the best we can for you all. Come! You're clean worn out, man, and as white as a corpse."

I followed him silently, after thanking him for his hospitable offer.

As we neared the farm I saw that it was the one whose barn we had used for a temporary shelter for the dead.

I stopped a moment.

"How many?" I asked.

"About sixty," he said, large tears rolling down his sunburnt cheeks. "Don't go in," he added, as I turned aside from the path to the house.

"I'll join you in one moment," I replied, and opened the barn door.

It was a ghastly sight, one to print itself for life upon a man's heart and brain, but clear and distinct upon mine, above the horror surrounding them, I see two figures, dead and cold, but undisfigured.

Where they took the train I never knew, but there, stricken down upon their wedding journey, gone together upon life's last awful voyage, lay Ralph Harmon and Jessie.

My brain reeled.

The first train that passed bore me to the city, and I reached Eastown in time to see Uncle Gregory before he died.

Had Jessie waited but one little week she might have married a richer man than Ralph Harmon, and broken no faith to me.

It was a bitter blow to me, false love and false friendship where I had given true and steady devotion, love, faithful fellowship.

But I did not sit down to mourn. I went abroad; I visited many lands and climes for ten years and then I met Nellie, who gave me love for love, constancy for constancy.

I am thoroughly happy, using my wealth, I trust, as a faithful steward; finding in my home, my wife, my children, all earth can give of pure content; and yet, the turquoise ring lying before me, proves that memory cannot die while life and reason live.

I will drop it back in this deep drawer, under other relics of the past, where it has lain since I took it out of the trunk into which it rolled from Jessie's last cruel note to me.

"You lie!" said the piece of coal to the gas meter. "You're another," said the meter; "if you weren't so short I'd pulverize you!"

Scientific and Useful.

BUCKETS.—To manufacture paper buckets ordinary wood pulp is used, mixed with glue or size, pressed into moulds, and varnished.

STONE AND DECAY.—The decay of stone may be arrested, either in buildings or monuments, by heating and treating with paraffine mixed with a little creosote. A common "paint burner" may be used to heat the stone.

WOOD AND STONE.—To make a cement for fastening wood to stone, melt together four pints of pitch and one of wax, and add four parts of pounded brick dust or chalk. It must be warmed before using, and applied thinly to the surfaces to be joined.

A NEW SHOE-TIE.—A simple and effective clasp for preventing the untying of shoe-laces in ladies' boots and shoes, has been recently introduced from Paris. The device consists of an ornamental spring clutch, which clasps the knot or tie on the lace and prevents it from slipping, whilst at the same time it looks like a buckle on the shoe.

PHONOGRAPHS.—Speaking of the phonograph, Edison says: "I have experimented with a device for enabling printers to set type directly from the dictation of the phonograph, and think that it will work to a charm. It is so arranged that the printer, by touching a lever with his foot, allows five or ten words of the phonogram to be sounded. If he is not satisfied with the first hearing, he can make it repeat the same words over and over again."

THE SHRINKAGE OF FLANNEL.—The following is recommended to keep flannels as much as possible from shrinking and felting. Dissolve one ounce of soda in a bucket of water, and leave the fabric in it for twelve hours. Next warm the water with the fabric in it, and wash without rubbing, also rinse through repeatedly. Next immerse the flannel in another liquid containing one spoonful of wheat flour to one bucket of water, and wash in a similar manner. Thus treated the flannel becomes nice and clean, has barely shrunk, and scarcely at all felted.

MAGNETISM AND DRILLING.—The curious fact that the usual heat produced by friction is absent when the articles are magnetized is just now being discussed by scientists who are seeking an explanation. Very striking examples are described in a late number of a scientific periodical. A workman fastened a couple of powerful magnets to his lathe, to hold more securely a piece of metal which he wished to drill and turn. The presence of the magnets kept the metal so cold that no water was needed to keep the drill moist and cool. This unusual circumstance may lead to important mechanical advantages.

Farm and Garden.

PIGS.—An open shed with a yard attached will not answer for the pigs in the winter season. They should be well protected, having a house with a door that can be closed at night, and be well provided with dry litter.

PIGS.—The pigs will thrive much better at this season when fed with only a sufficiency for growth. Do not attempt to fatten them, or overfeed them, as it would not be only a loss of feed but often injurious in causing indigestion.

WHITE-WASH.—A thick coat of whitewash on the walls of the cellar will be as productive of benefit now as during the warm season. It will also make the cellar light and cheerful, and greatly assist in preserving the purity of the atmosphere.

FARMING IMPLEMENTS.—Just at this time, when there is a chance to do so, all the implements should be cleaned and oiled. The harness may need overhauling, and loose spokes or tires of wheels can be repaired. In the spring the use of the implements will not permit of repairs without loss of time.

THE ORCHARD.—With trees set a considerable distance apart, as we find them in the apple orchard, the land may be seeded without much injury to the trees, if a small circle be kept open and cultivated about the trees. This will be no great task, and will save the orchard and keep it in good, thrifty, growing condition.

THE MANURE HEAP.—Adding piles of straw, leaves, and broken stalks to the manure heap, will give bulk without corresponding proportion of nutritious matter. These materials serve best as absorbents, and should first be made thus. They ought never be spread upon the field for crops until the entire heap shall have been well rotted.

BUTTER.—Experiments made to discover how much butter can be made from a pound of milk show a great variety of results. It has been found that the quantity of milk required to produce a pound of butter depends on so many greatly varying circumstances that no definite quantity can be fixed upon. Even the same cow's milk varies in quantity, as well as quality, from one day to another.

OIL AND INSECTS.—Oil is fatal to every insect it touches, and sulphur is very offensive to them. A mixture of four ounces of lard and one of sulphur, well rubbed together, and with the addition of one ounce of kerosene oil and one grain of creosote, will be found an excellent remedy against all sorts of insect vermin, while the liberal use of kerosene oil on poultry roosts will free the fowls of their tormentors.

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We would direct the attention of our friends and readers to the *marked reduction in our club rates* as given above, and respectfully ask those who are in the habit of getting up clubs for THE POST to enter the field soon as possible and try to increase their lists.

We are hoping to get a great many good sized clubs for the present year, and trust every one of our subscribers and readers will make an effort to send one. We make it easy for you to do so, for we have *reduced the club rates* to such a figure as to place THE POST within the reach of all, and it will require but a little effort on the part of any one to secure enough subscribers at the very low rates we offer to make a club.

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THE POST is much lower in price than any other first-class family paper in the country, and we think it only needs to be laid before the community to be subscribed for at once by thousands to whom it may still be a stranger, save, perhaps, by reputation. Of course we must depend in a great degree upon our present subscribers, friends and readers to show THE POST to their acquaintances and neighbors, and to speak a good word in our behalf. Their return for such efforts must be the pleasure they give to others, the consciousness of assisting in the good work of circulating THE POST, and enabling us to make it better, more useful and entertaining than ever before. Will they try and do it for us? Let each of our present friends and subscribers try to get a few new subscribers at least.

Sample copies for the purpose will be sent to those who wish them.

The Treatment of Others.

An old writer says: "The gentle mind by gentle deed is known, for a man by nothing is so well betrayed as by his manners." This is true, but good manners, as all will agree, must be spontaneous. They must spring from the innate dignity and geniality of a man's nature, or they are worth nothing.

A gracious manner that is assumed, a pleasant or sympathetic word that is spoken as a mere passing flattery, or without any real feeling, can easily be distinguished; the ring of the true metal is wanting.

Nothing ought to be pleasanter or more exalting to our mind than social intercourse, and this must be made pleasant, or the reverse, by the due observance of good manners.

When we come to look back upon our lives, we must own, every one of us, that we have liked those of our acquaintances the best who have drawn out the most of the good that is in us, who have kindled the strongest desire to increase our knowledge and to raise the standard of our thoughts. The foundation of every human soul is good.

Good nature, benevolence and consideration should always have a place in our intercourse with others. It is too true that to run down our neighbors is often more amusing than to speak well of them. There is much in everyone, if we had the wit to do it, which can be caricatured, but it is a most dangerous pastime.

There is no more essential an ingredient in the cup of pleasantness than tact, and yet how little of it there is. How often a man or woman engrosses a whole conversation to him or herself, forgetting that every one likes to have his "innings," and that silence would be most welcome.

It is a secret known to but few, yet of no small importance in the conduct of life, that when you enter into conversation with a man, the first thing you should consider is, whether he has a greater inclination to hear you, or that you should hear him.

We have heard many lament that they have no flow of language, and cannot keep up small talk in society; but if a man cannot talk, he can often be still more agreeable to his company, as well as pleased in himself, if he is only a hearer.

Any one who possesses the rare bit of tact will be able to see with a lightning glance that for some reason, unknown or forgotten, a subject is painful or unpleasant to some one of the company, and will be able to change it adroitly, yet not so suddenly as to call special attention to it.

It is also a happy art to listen with patience to an anecdote or piece of news which we have heard before, or to a joke which has been worn threadbare; but it is an effort which courtesy, kindness and good manners demand.

There are people who, after a story has been told in the most entertaining manner, with perhaps some pardonable embellishments, tell it over again with minute particulars that destroy the zest but throw light into the truth of what really took place. This may proceed from a strict love of truth, but it is not good manners.

The want of good manners—indeed of any manner at all—has its root in the way children are taught. You cannot teach a child too soon the refinement of manners. It is of no use to suppose that good manners will grow like mushrooms in a night.

Self-control is essential to good manners. How often you find, if a person has intringed upon the rules of courtesy, it is not that they wish to be rude, but that their own particular rose leaf has been crumpled for the moment, and they are quite indifferent as to how many of their neighbors they crumple in return.

Gentleness is too little cultivated in our intercourse with each other. Bishop Latimer said of his times, "There never were before in the country so many gentlemen and so little gentleness." This would not be if it were inculcated from earliest childhood that "Courtesy is a Christian virtue, and Christian charity the basis of all good breeding."

A great cause for the brusqueness we find in the world is from people having no real ease of manner, and being compelled to adopt that so called "naturalness" and disagreeable originality, which they imagine hides their gaucherie, just as an ill-taught school-boy will make a blot to hide a bit of wrong spelling.

COSTLY apparatus and splendid cabinets have no magical power to make scholars. In all circumstances, as a man is, under God, the master of his own fortune, so is he the maker of his own mind. The Creator has so constituted the human intellect that it can grow only by its own action, and by its own action it must certainly and necessarily grow. Every man must therefore, in an important sense, educate himself. His books and teachers are but helps, the work is his. A man is not educated until he has the ability to summon, in case of emergency, all his mental power in vigorous exercise to effect his proposed object. It is not the man who has seen the most or who has read the most who can do this; such a man is in danger of being borne down, like a beast of burden, by an overloaded mass of other men's thoughts.

SELFISHNESS in all its forms is a permanent foe to cheerfulness. There is perhaps no more prolific source of discontent and gloom than that which the selfish man finds in his narrow aims and baffled desires. But where the emphasis of life is laid on what is good and noble, where the life is spent in following truth and duty, where the affections are kept alive and warm by sympathy and kindly deeds, there the blessing of a cheerful spirit will be sure to follow.

THERE is one point in each life at which all things appear in their true colors. It is the point of death. All illusions vanish there. There are no false estimates of deeds in the light of that hour. The things we shall wish then that we had done are things we ought to have done. The things that will look fair and lovely as we sit in the gloaming of life's day are the things that are truly lovely. The things that will shame us then are the things that God condemns and which we ought not to have done.

WOULDST thou know the lawfulness of the action which thou desirest to undertake, let thy devotion recommend it to Divine blessing. If it be lawful, thou shalt perceive thy heart encouraged by thy prayer; if unlawful, thou shalt find thy prayer discouraged by thy heart. That action is not warrantable which either blushes to beg a blessing, or, having succeeded, does not present a thanksgiving.

THERE is nothing that we can properly call our own but our time, and yet everybody fools us out of it who has a mind to do it. If a man borrows a paltry sum of money, there must needs be bonds and securities, and every common civility is presently charged upon account. But he who has my time thinks he owes me nothing for it, though it be a debt that gratitude can never repay.

I HAVE told you of the Spaniard who always put on his spectacles when about to eat cherries, that they might look bigger and more tempting. In like manner I make the most of my enjoyments; and though I do not cast my eyes away from my troubles, I pack them in as little compass as I can for myself, and never let them annoy others.

ANGER, heat, exaggeration, violence, illnature, selfishness, are all foes to good manners. Self-control and self respect will diminish them by forbidding them to vent themselves. Kept in subjection, they will subside; allowed free expression, they will become intolerable.

HE who loves not God, nor his brother, cannot love the gifts of nature; while on the other hand, none can love God, nor his human brother, without loving all things which his Father loves.

MANY who would not for the world utter a falsehood are yet eternally scheming to produce false impressions on the minds of others respecting facts, characters and opinions.

IT is certainly much easier wholly to decline a passion than to keep it within just bounds and measure; and that which few can moderate almost anybody may prevent.

IT is with nations as with individuals; those who know the least of others, think the highest of themselves.

The World's Happenings.

A church tax is proposed in Canada.

There are two women dentists in London.

A blind man is the best plumber in Kenosha, Wis.

Teachers in the Province of Quebec are paid about $150 a year each.

A Maine man has a quantity of yarn spun from the fleece of a dog.

Tacoma, W. T., has a thief whose specialty is robbing church altars.

Actors have been successfully reading sermons from two of the London pulpits.

The skull of Guiteau is at present on exhibition in Baltimore, San Francisco and Paris.

There are whole towns in Germany that do little else but make dolls for American children.

The pound party, as a means of church charity, has been introduced into England, where it is considered "a singular experiment."

Passengers on a recent trans-Atlantic voyage varied the monotony of ocean travel by indulging in a game of cricket on the deck.

Mrs. Diaz, wife of the Mexican president, has established an extensive day nursery in the City of Mexico, to look after children whose mothers are out working.

A New York doctor has invented an apparatus with which he removes warts, moles and other excrescences from the human form divine by the use of electricity.

A novelty is an insole made of horse hair on a felt foundation. The felt absorbs the moisture, while the horse hair keeps the foot warm by constantly irritating it.

Burglars broke into a Boston residence, and the noise of them operating aroused the cat. The cat scampered about, awakening the family, and thus frightening off the burglars.

Each Senator and Representative at Washington is allowed stationery to the value of $100. Those who do not draw their full supply can draw in cash what is to their credit.

The striking fever has taken hold of the Chinese carpenters in San Francisco. They have given notice that if their wages are not raised from $2.50 to $3 per day they will strike.

Carmen Sylva, Queen of Roumania, has written a number of songs, each being the song of a laborer in a different branch of industry; as a carpenter, a glider, painter, upholsterer, or potter.

The first apple orchard in Kansas, consisting of 150 trees, was brought all the way from Illinois on a wagon, and planted in Douglass county in 1855. To-day the State has 32,000,000 fruit trees.

Christina and Katherine Adams, of San Francisco, two sisters, aged 19 and 16 respectively, have both lost their reason through the extraordinary revelations made to them by a fortune-teller.

A Florida paper complains that there are in that State "too many lawyers, doctors, preachers, editors and tramps, and not enough men who earn their living by the sweat of their brow."

It is an alarming fact, which has been brought to the attention of physicians in Boston in recent years, that deaths from heart disease are six to one as compared to what they used to be 30 years ago.

After the battle of Spottsylvania, W. K. Mullins, of Union Point, Ga., picked up a knife and fork on the battlefield. He took them home after the war, and from that day to this has never eaten a meal without them.

A lady living in Rappahannock county, Virginia, had 12 stands of bees, which were very valuable until a distillery was started in the neighborhood. Since it was started, however, the bees pay frequent visits to the still, get very drunk, and are of little profit.

Two gentlemen of Norwich, Conn., have had a match at cribbage together nearly every day since January 1, 1883, playing in that time nearly 15,000 games. One of them is now 20 games ahead of the other, and at no time has either had the advantage by more than 50 games.

Arthur Buddle, a prominent young farmer of Ames, N. Y., was at Randall a few days ago. A companion pulled a chair out from under him for a joke, and Buddle fell, striking his head against the wall. His brain was so jarred by the fall that he died in great agony.

Five negro forgers were arrested in Lancaster, and when brought together began quarreling violently, accusing one another of treachery. This suggested a mode of punishment, and each was provided with a whalebone whip and compelled to inflict 20 lashes upon every one of the others.

At Beaufort, S. C., a few days ago, a prominent citizen met a portly colored woman at a muddy spot on the street where only one could pass. Neither would turn aside, so each sent for a chair, and sat facing each other for several hours. The gentleman had his dinner brought, but after eating it gave up the contest.

At Akron, Ohio, George Miller, 60 years ago, planted a wild cherry tree with the remark that he was going to grow lumber for his own coffin. He carefully watched the tree up to 3 years ago, when it was cut down and sawed into boards, which were duly seasoned. Miller died recently, aged 90, and a carpenter made a coffin for him out of the lumber, in accordance with his last request.

Mr. George O. Wallace, of the great advertising firm of N. W. Ayer & Son, of this city, died Wednesday evening, December 28th, after a three days' illness. Mr. Wallace was born April 14, 1851, in Chester county, Pa. He came to Philadelphia about 18 years ago, and shortly after entered the employ of this firm. At the death of Mr. Ayer, Sr., Mr. Wallace was admitted into partnership in the firm—January 1st, 1874, and since that time was one of the most prominent and successful workers in the business. Mr. Wallace was noted among his business acquaintances for his integrity, diligence and courtesy, and his sudden death will be a shock to very many friends. He leaves a widow and one child.

SUNSET.

BY C. G.

A bright, clear streak of sunset gold
Tingeth each cloud,
Though darkly they the sun enfold
As with a shroud.

He is gone down to death a king;
In state he lies;
Royal the pall, his couching
Of stormy skies.

From that low cloud it is they gleam
Over the sky,
The glory-shafts that, far flashed, beam
Piercing on high.

So, Mortal, from the open grave
Of dear Hope lost
The rays purge up in golden wave
O'er darkness tost.

Still thou thy heart! The hidden light
But seeks the morn,
Thy Hope fares on through veiling night
To rise new-born.

In Two Days.

BY W. T. LACEY.

ALLOWING for disparity of years, Geoffrey Middleton nephew was as like in person to Geoffrey Middleton uncle as he was in name and in nature.

The two were the last representatives of their race, Middletons of Castle Middleton, and strangers who saw them together were sure to fancy them father and son until informed to the contrary.

They were both tall, thin, and muscular. Their features were rugged and boldly defined, speaking, without words, of force of character and vitality of will. None could look either uncle or nephew in the face—as they looked their neighbors—and read weakness there.

But the nephew, as became stalwart seven-and-twenty, had pretensions to be described as handsome (upon the family pattern), which his kinsman lacked.

As has been hinted, the physical resemblance was supplemented by analogy of temper.

Each was stiff, reticent, locked in the prison-house of a natural hauteur, and capable of a smouldering, dangerous resentment.

And in the case of old Geoffrey these attributes had of late come every one into play.

In his own fashion he was showing his extreme disapproval of the sayings of his heir, now on a visit to Elgin House, Sefton Park.

The prosperous Liverpool shipbroker saw the maxims of his life, those rules of caution and exactness by which he had built up a house the envy of a thousand rivals, apparently set at naught by a harum-scarum young surgeon.

He had wanted young Geoffrey to come into the office, and, misliking the outlook of perpetual quill-driving and equally systematic supervision, Geoffrey had refused. This was a first offence, and it had been condoned.

Funds were found to educate the refractory one for the profession he selected: and later, to purchase for him a share in a practice where he might still be beneath his uncle's eye.

Fairly launched thus, young Geoffrey had incontinently exchanged with a dissatisfied brother of the scalpel located at York. The score against him on his uncle's tablets of memory was therewith doubled.

And after many days he had come back in anything but the prodigal's *role* of humility and contrition, though the main purpose of his cross-country journey seemed to be to invite extrication from a financial difficulty.

"It's an awful nuisance, of course, and I'm disgusted with myself at having to come to you on such an errand, sir. But I never dreamed that it would turn out more than what Arbuthnot called it—'a mere form,'" he said. "And after all I suppose it's I that will be the loser in the long run."

Whether young Geoffrey's native talents were few or many, that of diplomacy was not amongst them.

If it had been, he would instinctively have avoided at this juncture the remotest reference to his uncle's well-understood intentions concerning the ultimate disposition of his wealth. It was the inevitable that such an allusion must, under the circumstances, grate upon the listener's ear.

In reality it stimulated old Geoffrey's anger to a perilous pitch. The shipbroker's brow was furrowed like a warped plank of one of his own vessels, the cold grey eyes scintillated with scorn, the lines deepened and grew rigid at the corners of the inflexible mouth.

Yet the bridle was upon his tongue. He was never the man to bandy futile reproaches or reveal the depth of his indignation in scathing, impetuous speech. The passion of his wrath found its familiar outlet—sarcasm.

"Most genially and pleasantly said," he answered. "Yes, it is you who will be the sufferer. There cannot be a doubt of that. And I quite acquit you of intending to subunit me to this trifling annoyance—the figures you mentioned were fifteen hundred pounds, I think?"

Young Geoffrey writhed upon his chair and felt uncommonly hot, although he was sitting at an open window with the June breeze fanning him.

Foolish he might be, a sad blunderer he was; but he had plenty of wit to see his error after committing it—no great thing, perhaps, to say in his favor, and certainly no unusual phenomenon.

And he recognized both the storm-signals on his uncle's countenance and the irony of the old man's tone and words.

Yet such now was the turn of his own mental and moral idiosyncracies that he made no pretence of apology, but tightened his lips and replied to the superfluous query in accents equally frigid and calm:

"Yes, rather more in fact; fifteen hundred and eighty."

"And you expect me to find you this sum?"

"To whom else should I apply, sir? I have no other resource. If my father were living it would be different. But you've stood in the place of both parents to me for many a year. And this is how I repay you!"

It was a sudden climax, and not the less a stroke of happy augury. If the young surgeon had paused there, there might be no story to tell.

His spasm of emotion, his repentance, genuine it destined to be short-lived, had favorably affected old Geoffrey, who loved his adopted boy with every fault upon his head.

But surely some mischievous sprite must have stood at young Geoffrey's elbow and have dictated new words of strife.

"And you can punish me, sir, by leaving as much more away to the office-boy, if you like. I rather wish you would," he fatuously added, as the lull grew harassing.

He had whistled for the wind, and the tempest was his reward, if such an epithet may properly be applied to the measured and restrained condemnation to which he was compelled to attend.

"You are still harping on the same cheerful string," said old Geoffrey, with a bland yet bitter smile upon his face—it was as though Patience should smile at the futility of her own forbearance—"I leave you to determine whether there is not after all the chance—mind, I only venture to say the chance—of another flaw in your calculations. You appear to have made one in relying upon your friend Mr. Arbuthnot's honor, and backing the bill which he cleverly leaves you to pay. Very possibly he, too, is aware of your great expectations. Or it may even be a planned business between you."

"Sir!—uncle!" The victim of this dubious money transaction sprang to his feet.

"Sit down," said the other drily, "it's not the Middleton way to go pop like a gingerbeer bottle, because shaken by a mere perhaps."

Young Geoffrey resumed his seat and bit his lip in silence.

"I didn't say that it was so; I don't know that I thought it. But, putting the best construction on your conduct, it's anything but satisfactory. My money has been made, sir, by hard work, pegging at it, and taking care of every guinea. Your cleverness seems to be exhibited in precisely an opposite direction. Your pockets, sir, are sieves. And to any man with an atom of real business about him, the backing of a stiff bill on next to no inquiry would be impossible. He could no more do it than scuttle a ship. You shall have the money, but beware—not a second time."

"It shall not occur again, sir."

The promise was sincere, but uttered in a manner neither gracious nor conciliating. It seemed to the young surgeon that he had been made the mark of a volley of missiles, everyone of which had left its bruise behind. And in addition he was no doubt buffeted by an accusing conscience.

Old Geoffrey crossed the room to an ebony cabinet fitted at the top as a writing desk; he took his cheque book from an inner drawer, filled up a draft, while the only sound in the apartment was the sullen ticking of a morose clock supported by griffins on the mantelpiece, passed the pink slip to his nephew and walked out into the adjacent conservatory. He had said his say and for the hour there was an end of it.

"Thank you; I am very sorry, I'm sure, sir," said the culprit. And by a different door he too vanished.

But the shipbroker did not dismiss the interview from his thoughts. It was with him all day at his office in Water Street, producing an increased testiness under which his clerks suffered and for which they could find no adequate palliation in the current condition of trade.

Even one of his skippers condescended to mention in the outer counting-house that "the boss was in a regular tear, raging like a nor'easter, and that all he, the sailor, could do was to reef sail and bring up close to the wind."

Old Geoffrey was slowly working out a problem more troublesome than any supplied by the figures on his ledgers or cargo sheets.

And at last he reached the goal of a great decision. It was clear that his nephew was unfit to be entrusted with the round half million so laboriously amassed. The scapegrace would make ducks and drakes of it. Yet to disinherit him by will was an irksome procedure and ran counter to life-long purposes and prejudices.

Old Geoffrey had ever been ready with his sneer at merchants who scraped and saved and left their hoard, at their reluctant exit, to asylums or charities. And so far as he knew there was not even a cousin half-a-dozen times removed who could be dragged into the warm circle of wealth while the delinquent was bidden stay out in the cold.

No; it was a choice of unwelcome alternatives that the shipbroker had faced. He might leave his nephew to present content and future triumph. Or—the first inception of the idea was attended by fierce mental throes that fully accounted for irritability of temper—he might marry. And to marry was his final resolve.

The revelation would have astounded his clerks, and have at once amused and scandalized his neighbors and intimates. And he opined, rightly or wrongly, that by it his misbehaved nephew would be thrown into consternation and despair. It was on this feature of the general effect that he fixed his prophetic gaze with most equanimity.

The scamp deserved the punishment.

Heroism was a word contumeliously dealt with in old Geoffrey's private lexicon. He professed to disbelieve in it altogether.

His synonyms for it were vainglory or—for the humbler sort, fanaticism. Yet the quality was not absent from the purpose which he was now shaping for immediate action.

He was sixty; all the ways of his life were ordered on a model tested and approved by prolonged experience; and it was understood with perfect correctness by the whole body of his associates, whether in Water Street or Sefton Park, that he was a confirmed misogynist. And in spite of these facts he had determined to write this very evening an explicit proposal of marriage to a girl of whom he knew little more than that she was pretty—reputed said cultured—and the daughter of his banker.

The deed was done before he again met the intractable nephew whose nose—he chuckled grimly to himself—might thus in due time be effectually put out of joint.

Young Geoffrey failed pitiably to read the true meaning of his uncle's elaborate politeness and elephantine mirth at the dinner-table.

Generally a dreary function at Elgin House was that of the great social feast! He fancied that the sky was clear again; that his uncle's wrath was appeased. He learned better when the solemn-visaged butler had withdrawn.

"Um! I think it right to inform you, Geoff, that I intend shortly to change my state—to marry," said old Geoffrey.

A wine glass was shivered, slipping in some occult way to the polished floor.

But there was no other overt symptom of discomfortment on the listner's part. A Middleton to the core he simply answered:—

"Indeed! Allow me to congratulate you, sir."

And old Geoffrey was strangely vexed at the sturdy restraint and the family phlegm which in a similar position would have characterized himself.

* * * * * *

"This means, don't you see, an end to idle dreaming, Dicks. I'll just have to buckle to work and coerce Dame Fortune in spite of her frowns. But I'd take it better, I think, if the governor had gone about this freak, for such I call it, after my latest scrape. And I shouldn't have been as much surprised then. But he must have settled it long ago. He announced it as a fact already in process of fulfilment. He dropped a word or two in the morning, as I was doing penance of confession, but I didn't take much heed then; I shall have to now."

Mr. Geoffrey Middleton the younger was discussing with the old friend and ally whose post he had taken at York the untoward alteration in his prospects disclosed to him on the previous evening. And not unnaturally, though in this instance erroneously, he gave his uncle the credit for acting with mature deliberation.

Edgar Dicks clapped him on the shoulder.

"Spoken like a Briton," he cried, "but I'd have taken oath that the old fellow had more sense. Yes, and a better regard for you. Who is the fair beguiler? She'll have a prize, eh?"

"She will. I speak in all seriousness. Not a syllable can or shall be uttered by my lips against my uncle. And he has a perfect right to do as he pleases in this matter. But who is to be the future Mrs. Middleton, I am as ignorant, Dicks, as you are."

"You asked him surely?"

"Not I. I suppose my wretched pride got in the path; ah, well, it's got a knock-down blow at last."

"Whew! You're a queer pair. Eccentricity must be hereditary; here's the proof."

And Dicks ended with a laugh, compounded in about equal parts of admiration, pity, and amusement—admiration for his comrade's chivalrous defence of the imperious old shipbroker, pity for young Geoffrey's abruptly overclouded hopes, and amusement at the humor of the off-hand avowal which Geoffrey had described.

At the same instant Dicks recollected a call he had to make in Park Street. They were far up Prince's Road.

"I shall have to wish you good morning, Middleton; it won't do to neglect duty, and the beckoning hand is at my rear."

The friends parted. Geoffrey strolled moodily along, battling with a certain temptation which was sure to attack him as he neared Prince's Park. In a house to his right resided Dusa Venn, a girl whom yesterday he had dared to picture on the canvas of an exuberant fancy as his wife, but who now was as far above him as the star is ever above the moth.

Her friends were rich, and he was a poor surgeon—nothing more. Had he not been duly warned that to build an airy castle on the basis of a great inheritance, as in the past he had been apt to do, was simply to set a premium on disappointment and disaster?

Henceforth he would walk amongst realities, and, as he had assured Dicks, put a decisive period to daydreams.

It was hard, all the same, to recognize that the acquaintance that had begun so blithely at Christmas, when Dusa had returned from Germany, and the hope of continuing and developing which had secretly combined with his monetary need to bring him now to Liverpool, must remain only a witching, tantalizing memory. Yesterday he had dared to call, and Dusa had been so kind that he had grown bold to whisper words into which she might, if she pleased, read passion and the old sweet homage of the man to the maid. He was invited to return—to drop in at any time he chose.

Why not for the last time now? On the morrow he would seek safety in flight to York.

Where a woman is in the question—especially a girl scarce twenty, with rippling golden hair, eyes like meres of living light, and a face and figure worthy of Aphrodite as she dwelt in a Grecian sculptor's brain—how shall man hold on the even tenor of his way and be strong?

Young Geoffrey's feet stayed, turned, finally stood in the hall of Gartmore, and then a strange thing befell him.

He was ushered into a lady's boudoir and found Dusa alone; and there was a look upon her face, and a sweet expectancy in her attitude, that caused his heart to thump against his breast as if seeking to depart and fly to that fair custodian for whom Nature had so clearly destined it. Already he was mystified, and it would hardly be too much to write, alarmed.

"Geoffrey!" whispered a soft voice. And volumes could not have gathered into their covers a fuller, richer meaning.

What bewildering portent was this? For hard strife with the yearnings of his own spirit Geoffrey Middleton had come prepared.

But not for a challenge of this sort. He was swayed like a reed in the wind. Every maxim of prudence was driven out of his head. The words of his answer—which was an appeal—came with but semi-conscious volition.

"Dusa—my dear one! Is there any hope?" he cried.

And ah, the bliss, the bewilderment of it! The shapely little head was pillowed upon his breast. Hope? This was certainty.

"But, Geoffrey, your letter said this evening; I was not looking for you yet. Were you so impatient?"

"My letter!" he echoed helplessly.

"Yes; and how curiously formal you were in expressing what—what I suppose is your wish"—the blushing face was averted, or young Geoffrey's slowly dawning look of horrified intelligence must infallibly have struck a chill to the tender heart that trusted him—"if I hadn't known you—as it really seems for an age, though it's such a little time—I should have fancied that, after all, you didn't very greatly care——"

"Stop, Dusa, treasure!" almost moaned the startled and dismayed lover; "nothing can change our regard for each other—nothing shall. We are agreed in that?"

Dusa was alert and quivering in every nerve with a new accession of excitement. It was her turn to be perplexed. Why this sudden tornado of anxious, foreboding passion?

"Yes, oh, yes," she replied, with a shy, pretty fervor.

"Then, Dusa, it was not I who wrote to you; it was my uncle!"

Only the rosy kiss of morning on Alpine snow will compare with the flood of carmine that overswept the stashed countenance.

Amazement and consternation between them riveted her to the spot, or the girl might have fled. If this were true, what a hoyden she must have appeared to her visitor.

Could anything be worse than to be won without being wooed. And her parents, too, had been deceived.

They had regarded the stately proposal as emanating from the nephew, and on the strength of old Geoffrey's wealth, in estimating which the banker had the assistance of private knowledge, they had graciously favored the suitor.

It was a terrible imbroglio, from whatever standpoint the complex question at issue was regarded.

But young Geoffrey had the courage of despair, and the nobility of his nature asserted itself.

"Forgive me, Miss Venn, for my ill-considered attempt just at pledging you to a promise which altered conditions may reasonably warrant you in breaking," he said; "I have been wrong, wrong all through. But I can make this amends. You are perfectly free, Miss Venn, as free as one short hour ago, even freer, for then your mind was entangled by error. I may never be my uncle's heir; he has told me that he means to marry; I did not know also. I am only a poor toiler; it is not for me to harbor vain ambitions, however sweet."

His voice died away in an involuntary sigh. The touch of self-pity in the last sentence of his great renouncement was almost tragic.

Dusa had recovered the control of her faculties, if not her self-possession. She smiled through tears.

"But you made a promise, too; and unless you wish it, I will not release you," she said.

There was a happy pause, in which—— But the narrator relents, and leaves the hiatus. And Dusa added, with a flash of mischief irradiating her tremulous confusion:

"Only I wish I'd been familiar, Geoffrey, with your hand-writing."

* * * * * * *

Philosophers, who differ in some other matters almost as vehemently as politicians, are agreed that success is not synonymous with happiness.

It is possible to have a big banking balance, costly freight on many seas and even seniority in the procession to the civic chair, and to hobnob nevertheless with discontent.

The foot may have its corn and wince at the slightest touch beneath the velvet slipper.

These moral reflections owe their origin in this place to the profound dissatisfaction that had crept like a Mersey fog of December over the spirit of Geoffrey Middleton, shipbroker. His position was precisely that dexterously insinuated above. And the cause thereof was his own hastily adopted purpose of matrimony.

His fateful letter once posted by his own hand, for fear of accidents or the impertinent curiosity of domestics, he felt for the moment triumphant.

It was in this mood that he had dealt his sharp thrust at his nephew over the wine and the dessert in the dining-room.

But when he retired that night, it was to a weary vigil in which carking care was biting like an acid into the pattern of his heroic resolve.

With a young and ardent lover the major uncertainty would have been whether he was to be accepted or rejected. But old Geoffrey's thoughts did not tarry long at this stage.

He had witnessed too many sacrifices of fair, ingenuous spring-time to wan, saturnine winter to have much doubt that he could lead to the altar yet another victim.

He was wealthy, and it was enough; Guardians would advise, and the girl's own vanity and desire to possess the advantages credited to the station of a rich man's darling would give her strength to crush down any natural repugnance.

The anxiety was of a different sort. Was he sure that he had fully calculated the cost of the step in personal security, comfort, and ease? And every time he went over anew the ground of the arguments pro and con the keener became his doubts. In the morning he got up with feelings surely cast on the model of those with which Mr. William Sykes may regard the final ceremony in a prison court-yard at which his presence is ever likely to be required.

Mightily glad was old Geoffrey that he had not to face his nephew, who was a late riser, at the breakfast-table.

And if on the previous day a nor'easter had rattled about the ears of his Water Street employes it was a veritable hurricane that blew anathemas hither and thither from ten to three on this date of doom. One of his clerks resigned then and there.

Everything went wrong; though, as he was at bottom a scrupulously fair man, there could be little doubt that old Geoffrey would by-and-by come to acknowledge that the fault was in himself.

And a fellow trader who dropped in with a budget of gossip did not throw oil on the troubled waves.

"Sad about Danby, isn't it?" he asked.

"What? I haven't heard. I thought his firm was as solid as—as St. George's Hall."

"Oh, so it is; there's no screw loose in Danby, Porter and Porter. But the old man's shaky here," and the friend significantly tapped his parchment-like forehead; "they're sending him to an asylum. Married a young wife, you remember. That's done it. A nice dance she led him. Better have stayed as he was—as you are, Middleton."

"Quite so," said old Geoffrey grimly. And he relapsed into his ledger again.

"Quite so; and next month everybody will be saying that I'm as big a fool, and prophesying on my account," he muttered irrelevantly when, with a farewell word about a shipment of wool from Melbourne, the visitor had gone.

"Confound the boy," he went on in his bitter soliloquy; "what did he want to be so cocksure about his coming in for my money for? As for the fifteen hundred and eighty—it was a heavy figure—I could have forgiven him that. And now he's let me in for a worse scrape."

Remorse was working. But what could it avail a man who had drawn up a document as compromising as half the inane compositions that figure in reports of breach of promise suits, and had watched it with a malicious smile committed to the charge of Her Majesty's Postmaster General. With a groan his conscience supplied the response—none.

He was bound by every consideration of honor and probity to go through his enterprise.

And this meant a call that evening at Gartmore. His exact expression in his old-fashioned and somewhat cumbersome phraseology had been:—

"In so important a matter, my dear Miss Venn, I would earnestly desire that you should eschew a hasty decision, and I therefore will ask to be permitted to wait in person at your home for your reply during the early hours of to-morrow evening."

And he went.

Not altogether to his surprise Mr. Venn received him. It was quite in keeping with his notions of propriety, that the preliminaries of the momentous contract should be settled with his future bride's father; and, in truth, he was very considerably relieved to have to enter (as he supposed) upon a purely business discussion and to postpone the ordeal of making love.

What he should find to say when the latter labor had to be undertaken it passed his power of conjecture to imagine. He could only hope that the crisis—and he dreaded it worse than an interview with his dentist—would by its very severity kindle within his mind illumination for the road he had so fatuously elected to travel.

Mr. Venn was a rotund little man, with a bustling manner, twinkling dark eyes—the twinkling was intensified at this juncture—and the good gift of sound digestion, which renders ill-temper on any but the most insolent provocation a base ingratitude to kindly providence.

"Delighted to see you at Gartmore, Middleton, and—ahem! I believe I have some idea of your errand," said he.

The shipbroker bowed.

"I fully expected that you would understand," he answered. And then somehow he paused, for it was borne in upon him that he was on the eve of listening to some disturbing revelation. Nothing could be wrong with the bank surely? It was a dreadful thought which made him quake to his boots. Certainly Venn's face wore an aspect of funeral gravity, relieved only by the oddly contrasted brightness of his eyes, where a couple of imprisoned sunbeams seemed to be basking.

"First, let me express my sense—our sense—of the honor done to my daughter, and through Dusa to her parents, by your offer of this morning, Mr. Middleton."

Old Geoffrey breathed a trifle more freely. It was the question he had come about then that accounted for Venn's solemnity.

The stability of the famous old banking-house was unimpaired. It was a ridiculously absurd terror that had seized him.

"But, Middleton, I am sorry."

"I am afraid I don't take you."

And indeed the inference seemed too good to be true. Never, surely, did *pretendu* await with more eagerness the verdict of dismissal.

"I repeat that I am sorry. My daughter's affections are bestowed already—elsewhere, my dear Middleton. And there has been an odd mistake, the oddest mistake, I think, I ever knew or heard of. If I had seen your letter I should have known of course. But you see Dusa is quite unfamiliar with your hand; and then you write as vigorously as—as your nephew might do. And I was busy; I didn't ask to see the note. Dusa told me what was in it, and whom she supposed that it came from, and so, as I say, we blundered all round."

Light was slowly breaking on old Geoffrey's mind.

Perhaps the reaction from the dread that he might be taken at his word and married out of hand (so to speak) by a flighty young miss quickened his faculties of apprehension. It was queer how strong was his temptation to re-enact the schoolboy of five-and-forty years ago and throw up his hat at the joyful news of regained liberty. But there was more to learn.

"Do I gather correctly that you mistook the sender?"

"Dusa did; pardon me, not unnaturally."

"Then Miss Venn could only read that note as coming from——"

"Your nephew."

"Possibly I may still be within my right? Was its petition then denied?"

"No it was granted. And it was at Dusa's request that I am here to tell you this. Will you see her?"

"Not now, not now, thanks."

The banker, whose love for his daughter had made him more compliant than perhaps his cautious professional instincts justified, and who had not withdrawn his consent to the young surgeon's suit—a consent given as it transpired in error—even when the quarrel at Elgin House stood disclosed, made clear with a few more pithy words what had happened.

And his shrewd insight into his patron's character was vindicated in the sequel.

"Have no fears, Geoffrey, your uncle will come round," he had said; "I am only glad that it was through Dusa that he proposed to punish you."

Old Geoffrey went home, humiliation swallowed up in relief. He found his nephew standing in the library, hunting up certain cartoons in an old volume of "Punch." With a quick nervous tread he stepped to his side.

"We are quits, Geoff, now," he said, "I saved you from one dilemma, and you've delivered me from another. I'll not forget the service."

And it was the last reference he made to his two days' wooing.

In the autumn he settled an income of six hundred a year, as a marriage gift, on Geoffrey Middleton nephew.

"Pat."

BY BERTIE BAYLE.

PAT was the Colonel's daughter.

In justice to her god-parents it should be stated that they were not responsible for the gift of such a name. But having spent five out of her ten long years in Ireland, and having returned from that country with a ruddy and tangled mop of hair, a freckled face, and a pair of roguish, blue-gray eyes, and a most unmistakable brogue, it was needful to find a more suitable title than her baptismal one of Valerie. "Pat" was not far to seek, and Pat she forthwith became and continued.

After the camp at the Curragh, Pat found the barracks at Eastcliff horribly dull and monotonous.

The garrison was a small one—no cavalry; and oh, the stinginess of an economical Government—I almost hesitate to write the appalling fact—actually no band! It had been suppressed on the score of needless expense.

One advantage the place owned: it was on the sea, and was an important naval as well as military station.

This, as Mrs. (Major) Granton remarked, made the society so "varied," for besides the permanent Flag-ship there were generally two or three gun-boats either fitting up or returning from a cruise, and then the families of the officers attached to them would come and take lodgings for a time in the neighborhood.

To be sure there was the trifling drawback, that as soon as you got to know and like any people they were immediately "ordered away;" but a soldier's wife gets accustomed to this, and in a garrison town friendships are easily made and lightly broken.

Pat cared nothing at all for "society," and a great deal for the prancing horses and stirring music of her beloved Curragh. Here the highest pitch of excitement ever reached was a General's inspection, and that was poor indeed compared with the raptures of a field-day, with all its glories of a mimic battle.

Remembering these, Pat sighed as she stood one afternoon and surveyed her present surroundings.

To the right, dividing the officers' quarters from the men's, the bare and trampled parade ground stretched dustily away, looking hotter and uglier than ever in the blazing sunshine.

Just now it was deserted, except where in a distant corner an awkward squad of half a dozen men were going through their first stages of drill.

Nothing of interest there.

Away outside the barracks lay the glittering expanse of sea, dotted over with scores of vessels, for this was the direct highway to London.

It was a pretty outlook, but possessed no attraction for Pat to-day, for nearer at hand at last she had discovered something really exciting—something exciting, that is, for a sleepy afternoon in August, when, as a rule, the big, unlovely blocks of buildings have swallowed up all signs of life.

"Ted!" she shrieked, "quick—come quick! They're moving one of the guns up on the bastions—such fun!"

Fun it might be to the children who stood and looked on; to the twenty-five or thirty gunners who wrestled with the huge piece of artillery, it was tolerably hard work.

Bare-headed, in their grey shirts, with scarlet faces and starting muscles, inch by inch they dragged the gun along the steep and narrow path that led up to the bastions from the parade ground below. Every moment they were forced to stop and rest, and then, encouraged by the shouts of the energetic sergeant in charge, bent cheerfully to their task again, even breaking into a roar of laughter when a misdirected effort of vigor suddenly landed the greater number of them on the stinging gravel.

Superintending the performance, but taking no part in it beyond giving a few quiet orders now and then, was one of the junior lieutenants, Mr. Raven.

With his trim figure, and carrying his white gloves and slim little cane, he looked the only idle one of the party; and Pat, who was gifted with a vivid imagination, and had a chronic feud with Mr. Raven, whispered maliciously to her brother—

"I say, Ted, isn't he just like one of those horrid Egyptian slave-drivers—you know, what Moses killed?"

Ted's Biblical knowledge was not equal to that of his sister's, but he made a point of agreeing with her on every subject where he felt his inferiority; so he hastened to say—

"Why, yes, Pat, of course he is."

"I can't bear that man," continued Pat in a low and confidential tone. "You don't like him, do you, Ted?"

"Why, yes, I do—rather," said the boy, reluctantly. "You see, he always lets me ride his horse round to the stables after parade."

Pat tossed her tawny mane, as if that were a very trivial excuse for liking a person.

"Well, I don't care, I heard papa scolding him most awfully after the inspection yesterday," she said in a tone of importance. "They never saw me, for I was up in a tree behind the powder magazine, and I heard quite well. Papa said, 'How the—(you know what, Ted)—sir, do you expect the men to know their drill when the officers don't? It's a disgrace, sir, a perfect disgrace to the service.' Oh, papa was very angry, and Mr. Bertram was there too, and Mr. Carlisle, and they all got rot; but Mr. Raven was the reddest of all, because papa said his battery was the worst drilled in the whole barracks. Wasn't it dreadful?"

Pat ended in a slightly awestruck voice, for truth to tell the Colonel's "remark" on the present occasion had been of a decidedly impressive character.

The men had come off badly enough during their three hours' purgatory in the boiling sunshine, but it was for the handful of officers that remained when these were dismissed that the hottest vials of the Colonel's wrath had been reserved. And, as Pat said, Mr. Raven had been singled out as the most complete and absolute specimen of "disgrace" that had ever entered the service.

"I know why father was so cross," said Ted, learnedly. "It's because the General is coming next week. He's always cross, Jane says, when the General's coming."

"Jane knows nothing about it," cried Pat, indignantly; "as if papa cared for that stupid, fat old General! But look, Ted, look—the cannon is nearly at the top."

Pressing forward in their eagerness, and taking a short cut up the grassy slope, the children came close to the scene of operations.

It was a critical moment. The heavy gun-carriage stood just where the path took a sharp turn upwards, and every nerve and sinew of the soldiers were strained to prevent its slipping either backwards or over the slope.

With ropes stretched to their utmost tension, and hands gripping the bending levers, the men held their position; but it was a hard fight, and unless they won within the next few minutes, all their toil might yet be in vain.

The portly sergeant had already seized a rope, and Raven was swinging himself up to a higher level the better to direct their movements, when a copper-colored mop of curls suddenly appeared in view, and a small voice said, cheerfully—

"Ted and I have come to help. We can push behind."

Raven darted to look in their direction. It was no time for ceremony, and the sight of the risk they ran sharpened his tone.

"Get away, you children! What are you doing there?" he shouted. "Be off this instant. Right away!"

Not a moment too soon. Already startled at their appearance the men had insensibly loosened their grasp, and the gun was slipping—slipping back along the path they had come.

"Now, lads, all together—Ready?" gasped the panting sergeant. "Now, then—now!"

"All together—pull!" echoed Raven, and a second later a shout of triumph went up as the massive wheels ground heavily onward and rested in a place of safety.

Then Raven had time to think of the Colonel's children.

He looked round for them, but they had vanished.

Hand-in-hand, with heads carried proudly in the air, and hearts indignantly burning at this curt rejection of their offer of assistance, Pat and Ted marched off.

Only one remark did Pat make as they entered the doors of their house.

"I am glad that horrid Mr. Raven is ordered to India," she said, with deadly composure, not sorry to have an opportunity of displaying her knowledge of the East. "I hope he'll get eaten alive by a tiger and bitten to pieces by snakes."

The reckless abandon of Pat's malediction was too deep for Ted, who could only gaze back at her with a good deal of trouble in his big brown eyes.

That evening, however, he had the chance of showing his practical sympathy in the case.

If you had been out riding, and passing the Colonel's house on the way to his own quarters, he saw the children standing on the steps.

"Hi, ho, young Cavendish," he called to the boy; "have a ride on Cherry?"

The double intoxication of being addressed in this manly fashion and offered a ride on the daintily stepping Cherry was almost too much for six-year-old Ted. But he had a loyal little heart, and opposite was Pat, still reigning in the majesty of insulted dignity.

He could not trust himself to speak, but he shook his head, and then turned and rushed into the house.

He had done his duty like a hero, but it was more than he could stand just then to see the pretty black mare led away with an empty saddle.

Raven lifted his eyebrows with a gleam of amusement, and then saluting Miss Valerie (who returned his greeting with her chin very high in the air), rode on and dismounted at his own door.

He was a good natured, scatter-brained young fellow, and had already forgotten the incident of the afternoon, excepting so far as to repeat as a good joke at mess that night poor little Pat's offer to "push behind."

His imagination was not brilliant, and any idea of possible wounded feelings never came to disturb the humor of the situation.

To him the children were simply "comic little beggars," good to play with, tease, or laugh at, as the case might be. Pat, with her sudden freaks of fantastic mischief and lofty dignity, thought him quite the most hateful person she had ever come across.

It was about a week after this that one day there were to be some experiments at Estcliff with a new kind of torpedo. Besides the inventor, a young engineer from another town, only a few people were present in the part of the dockyard from which the best view of the proceedings was to be obtained—among others, the Colonel, his children, and three or four of the officers.

"Hush!" whispered Pat, "there's that horrid Mr. Raven. Do come away before he sees us."

Every one's attention was taken up with the preparations for launching the torpedo, and the children managed to slip away unnoticed.

Two or three minutes later, they were hanging over the edge of the gun-wharf, watching the myriads of jellyfish that were whirled past in the rapid current thirty feet below.

To be sure there was an iron rail for protection; but that was quite three feet from the ground, and both Ted and Pat found it more convenient to look under it than above.

It was not long before they were missed. Scientific experiments were dear to the soul of the Colonel, but his children were dearer. And, moreover, their mother was dead.

Everything was now ready. On the shore, resting on its wooden carriage, lay the beautiful glittering creature, looking like some strange gigantic fish eager to plunge in the depths of the sea.

Two slender wires were carried from it to an upper window of the fort; there was the steering apparatus, and the young engineer stood above to direct its course.

The little steam-launch that was to tow it back to land had puffed noisily away, and was now stationary about a mile off. The men in charge of the torpedo only waited for the signal from above to give the final touch that should release it from captivity, and send it flashing through the water on its pathway of foam.

And this, of all moments, was the one in which the Colonel became aware of his absence!

He glanced round, and a young officer near guessed what he wanted.

"Is it the children, sir? I saw them two or three minutes ago over there."

The Colonel smothered his feelings and the exclamation that rose to his lips.

Raven, in spite of innumerable lectures, was devoted to his commanding officer, and the Colonel's passion for mechanics was well known in the barracks.

"Let me go, sir; I'll find them," he said, eagerly. "See—there—it's off!"

And, sure enough, at this moment the torpedo glided down the rails and plunged into the sea, tossing up a shower of spray.

After all it was a very divided attention that the Colonel gave to the experiment for which he had waited so long; he watched almost as carefully the progress of the young man through the intricacies of the gun-wharf as he did that of the little flag that fluttered along so quickly just above the surface of the water.

Pat and Ted, radiantly happy in their secluded corner, had stretched themselves flat on the ground, and were hanging head and shoulders over the edge.

Pat was just pointing out another of those dear delicious clumps of jelly when the sound of a step made her start guiltily.

"Get up, Ted—quick!" she cried, giving him a push to emphasize her words.

Ted, frightened in his turn, half rolled over, tried to scramble to his feet, clutched wildly in the air, and the next instant was clinging terrified to one of the upright posts of the rail, while Pat was screaming and struggling in the water thirty feet below.

There was another splash a moment later.

Young Raven might be slow-witted and not very wise, but this was not an occasion that called for intellect.

When Pat, very cold, very tearful, and very shivery, was presently restored to her father, that distinguished soldier was trembling more than the child.

Not a word of thanks did he speak; he simply looked at Raven. But, somehow, before that glance the younger man's eyes fell, and as for his face, it grew redder even than on the day when Pat had heard him pronounced a "disgrace to the service."

"There's your plucky little heroine," he said, putting the dripping bundle into the Colonel's arms. "It was trying to save Ted that she pitched over."

After this, Pat, with commendable fickleness, came to the conclusion that, on the whole, perhaps Mr. Raven was quite the nicest person in the barracks. But he never knew how fully he was revenged for her former hatred.

A month or two later there was excitement one morning at Estcliff; one of the batteries was leaving for India, and a captain and two lieutenants were going with it.

Of course, the whole of the barracks turned out to see them start, and the Colonel's children stood on the steps of their house.

The men were drawn up on the parade ground, and now there were a jingling of spurs and a clanking of swords as the little group of officers drew near.

Mr. Raven's face was not in the least red today. On the contrary, it was rather white, and his lips were certainly tightly shut; but his eyes were smiling, with an odd sort of light in them.

Reaching the children, he stopped.

"Good-bye, Miss Valerie," he said. "Don't go in for any more swimming matches—will you?—without sending me word. Good-bye, Ted; be a good boy till I come back."

"Yes," said Ted, deeply impressed, and lifting up a solemn little face.

The young officer bent down for an instant; then a clock struck, a bugle rang out, and a minute later came the tramp of marching feet.

Half an hour afterwards Pat was discovered in her room, utterly inconsolable.

Between her sobs it was just possible to make out—

"He kissed Ted—and he never k-k-kissed me."

MEXICAN PEDDLERS.—Among the established institutions of Mexico are the itinerant merchants, who continually perambulate the streets; for if the mountain can't come to Mahomet, it naturally follows that Mahomet goes to the mountain.

Besides his little tray of goods, and the ribbons, bows, scarfs, and embroideries hung over his arms and shoulders, the peddler carries a camp table, which he sets up upon the pavement, and deposits on it his wares while conducting business. Between the bars of the window, for, being a horse man," of course he must not go inside.

Apparently the female heart is the same the wide world over, and the great delight which these dark-eyed women take in purchasing all manner of trumpery, from silk dresses to gingerbread horses, is identical with that of their American cousins.

At all hours of every day, but especially on Sundays, in every city and hamlet of Mexico, these perambulating merchants swarm the streets, offering all imaginable commodities, from a ribbon of hot tamales to sweet potatoes, to hair pulls and trousers.

Long poles project from the windows and lintels of the houses, to which are suspended, not only notions innumerable, but the goods of tailors and hardware merchants, milliners and grocers, shoes, jewelry, saddles and harness, pigs alive and dead, pieces of meat, goats and poultry, young kids that cry like babies, cages of birds, opals fresh from the mines and pearls from the Pacific fisheries, antiquities from ruined pyramids and buried cities, sometimes of priceless value, which they sell for a few cents because they are old—in short, everything the imagination can conceive.

The fruit peddler bears his figs, bananas, grapes, onions, peppers, and potatoes, all mixed together in the huge wooden bowl on his head.

The dulce (sweetstuff) vendor carries his sweets on a tray, slung around his neck with a rope of maguey; the milk seller bears his cans upon his back; the water carrier has two enormous jars, one hanging behind, the other before, both upheld by a leathern strap around his forehead; while the petroleum man carries his well-watered stock in a tin box and retails it by the gill, or wholesales it at the rate of four shillings a gallon.

The baker comes round twice a day, at early morn and dewy eve, with his bread, which would make excellent cannon balls, in a basket balanced upon his head.

He always carries his precious sombrero, which probably cost him a year's earnings, in the basket among the loaves, and if a thrifty fellow, he economizes his shoes in the same manner.

The cake vendor shouts in soft-vowelled Castilian, "Fat little cakes! Fat little cakes! Here are good fat little cakes!" "Curd cakes!"

While the vendor of poultry, sauntering along in the sun with his cane cage on his shoulders, sings, in sleepy monotone! "Ducks and chickens! Oh, my soul, Good ducks and chickens!"

THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS.

ONCE upon a time there was a hermit, who lived in a forest, and he was not afraid of wild beasts. The hermit and the wild beasts used to talk together, and they understood each other.

One day the hermit was lying under a tree, and gathered together there for the night were a crow, a pigeon, a deer, and a serpent. These creatures began to talk about trouble in the world.

The crow said:

"Trouble comes from hunger. When you are satisfying your hunger perched on a branch and croaking, everything seems to you pleasant, good, and happy. But just fast for two days, and you will look on nature with a very different spirit. You feel nervous. You cannot stay in one place. You never have a moment's rest. And, if you happen to see a bit of meat, it is worse still, and you throw yourself upon it without a moment's thought. No matter if they beat you or throw stones at you. Dogs and wolves may snap at you, but you never let go. How many of us are killed from hunger! Is not this the way? All trouble comes from hunger!"

The pigeon said:

"I say that trouble does not come from hunger. Trouble comes from love. If we lived alone, we should not suffer so much—at least there would be only one trouble; but as long as we live in couples, and you love your mate dearly, you have no rest. You think only of her. Has she had plenty to eat? Is she warm enough? And, whenever she is away from her mate, then you feel entirely lost. You are beset by the idea that a goshawk may have carried her off, or that she had been taken off by men. You begin to search for her, and end by getting into trouble yourself—perhaps into the meshes of a net. And if your mate is lost, you can neither eat nor sleep. You do nothing but search for her and weep. How many of us die thus? All trouble comes from love, not from hunger."

The serpent said:

"No; trouble comes neither from hunger not yet from love, but from ill-nature. If we lived peacefully, if we did not quarrel, then everything would go well. On the other hand, if a thing is done against your will, you fly into a passion and are offended at everything. You only think of venting your anger on some one. You do nothing but fume and fret, and would like to bite some one. You have no pity for any one. You would even bite your father and mother. You could eat yourself. At last you are undone by your own fury. All trouble comes from ill nature."

The deer said:

"No; it is not from ill-nature, nor is it from love or hunger that trouble comes. It is from fear. If it were not for fear all would go well. We are fleet-footed and strong. Our antlers defend us from small animals, and we can run away from large ones; but we cannot escape from fear. If a branch creaks in the forest or a leaf moves, we tremble at once from fright. Your heart begins to beat as if it were going to leap from your breast, and if you dart off like an arrow. Again, it is said that pheasants, a bird that depends wings, [illegible] is a wild animal, [illegible] toward danger. Presently, [illegible] dog, you run upon a hunter. Then, [illegible] come with fear, you run, not knowing whither. You make a bound, and [illegible] precipice, where you meet death. Always sleeping with one eye open, always on the alert, always frightened. No peace. All trouble comes from fear."

Then the hermit said:

"It is neither from hunger, nor love, nor ill-nature, nor fear that our troubles come. Trouble comes from our own dispositions, for they breed hunger, love, ill-nature, and fear."

HOW THE AIR-BRAKE WORKS.—A railroad official who believes that not one person in a hundred who travel understand how the pressure of air is used to apply the brakes to a train, thus enlightens the public on the subject in an interview:

"When the air brake was first invented, the air was turned into the cylinder under each car when the car was to be stopped, and the pressure was exerted to force the brakes up against the wheels. But at the present day the brakes are held against the wheels by springs, and the air is turned into the cylinders to push the brakes away from the wheel as long as the train is in motion. When it is desired to stop the train the air is let out, and the springs apply the brakes and stop the train. This last method of using air pressure has great advantages over the old way on the score of safety."

"What are they?" he was asked.

"Why, whenever an accident happens to a train, one of the first effects it is apt to have is to rupture the air-pipes leading from the engine to the cylinders under the cars; and that, of itself, stops the train instantly. It is very important for everybody to understand this matter, because a child 5 years old can stop a train in thirty seconds, from any car in the train, if he simply understands how. You will see, if you look for it, that there is a sort of rope projecting from the toilet room of every car. That connects with the air-pipes under the train. If you catch hold of it and give it a little jerk, it will stop the whole train."

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

A Pittsburg paper remarks "there are ten times more tenants turned out of their houses and rooms in the city of New York in a year for the non-payment of rent than there are evictions in all Ireland. In the former there were, according to court records, 22,804 families evicted in twelve months; in the latter, according to a parliamentary report, there were 2098."

A Liverpool paper gives this instance of a modern Solomon in judgment: In a country court, near London, recently there was a trial to determine the ownership of a dog. The judge couldn't make out from the evidence which claimant was the real owner, so he made one stand on each side, while an officer held the dog in the middle of the room. Then he told them both to whistle and the officer to release the dog at the same moment. When this was done the dog bolted through the open door. "Call the next case," was all the comment the judge made, although the litigants stormed.

A novel horse race took place in London the first of the month. The distance was a mile and a half, the horses to walk the first half-mile, trot the second, and finish with a half-mile run, thus testing the animals on all gaits. There were fifteen starters, and before the finish the interest of the spectators was wrought up to the highest pitch. The fast walkers had the advantage, as the horse that could leave his closest competitor even twenty or thirty yards in a walk of a half mile, could open up a gap at a trot, while the others were finishing their walk to the wire, that it would require sharp trotting to overcome. A spectator says the race was one of the most interesting he ever witnessed.

A little West Side (Chicago) child had a miraculous escape from death, or at least serious injury. A small, self cocking revolver was carelessly left, loaded, in a dressing case. The baby, who is about two years old, discovered it and shortly after terrified his mother by appearing in the parlor, where she was entertaining a caller, with the muzzle of the revolver between his lips for a pipe. The terrified mother sprang forward and tore the dangerous plaything from the child's grasp and threw it across the room, where it exploded with a crash. Fortunately no one was injured. The youngster set up an angry cry for his pipe, as he called it. It was afterward discovered that he had been enjoying his smoke all the way down from the third floor.

The following are said to be bona fide replies to questions of a written examination in geography in the secondary grade of a public school in Pennsylvania: Question—Tell how many oceans there are in the world and name them. Answer—There are six oceans—the Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic, Antarctic, Indian and adjacent ocean. Q.—Give in your own words the difference between a cave and a mountain. A.—One is a bump in and the other is a bump out. Q.—Tell in your own words [illegible] as represented on the map, and [illegible] to the letter A. When [illegible] a man began to drink a lot of apple-jack and gather all the sour cider he could find, and [illegible] water instead of angle-worms.

Works of art in the streets and squares of cities are more liable to decay than those in the country, and this decaying process is more rapid nowadays than it was forty or fifty years ago. We attribute it not only to the changes of temperature in general, but most especially to the variations of temperature near the freezing point, the freezing of the water in the pores of the work of art hastening the decay, in consequence of the sulphuric acids, arising from the increased use of coal. These deleterious ingredients mixing with the rain, fog and dew act like diluted sulphuric acid on the surfaces of statues, monuments etc., be they of stone or bronze. Worse than all these, however, is the effect of the snow, which absorbs those acids to a remarkable degree.

An article in a leading magazine says: While I would not have the State teach anybody's religion, I would have the public schools give careful and thorough instruction in morality. I am perfectly well aware that there is no agreement among the different schools of thinkers as to the origin, the underlying principles, or the ultimate sanction of ethics. But all this need not trouble anybody, or seriously interfere with the practical work of the public schools. There is no practical disagreement as to what sentiments and feelings it is right to cherish, or what conduct it is right to indulge in as between man and man. And there is no question that these right feelings and actions do conduce to public welfare and private happiness. What the feelings and actions are, that, that human history shows have been conducive to the general good, these surely may be easily taught; and I see no reason why a text book of morals might not be drawn up as easily as one on mathematics or geography.

Discord in a union may prove fatal to its continuance. Use Warner's Log Cabin Hops and Buchu Remedy for stomach troubles, and expel the discordant element in your health. 150 doses for $1. All druggists.

Our Young Folks.

"STOP THIEF!"

BY L. F.

IN a small room at the top of a high house in the town of Hull lay a poor man on a heap of rags. His pale cheeks and short breath told the tale of how death stood at his door. A tin mug lay by his side, and a chair with three legs stood by the wall, and that was all there was in the room. His wife sat by him on the floor, her eyes full of tears, and her babe held tight to her breast, a girl and boy of eight and nine, too weak from want of food to care to play, like most boys and girls, had crept close to the heap of rags to watch by the poor man's side.

"I must just go out once more," said the man at last to his wife, "may-be some one will be kind to you and the bairns, and give you some food."

"Oh, John!" said the wife, "it does break my heart to see you in the state you are in, and I can't consent for you. Do not send me out, let me stay with you. Jack and Nell can go."

"You had best go with them," said the man, "for then if you do get aught you can keep it safe."

Yes, this was true, for the last time the boy and girl went out by themselves they met a young girl who was out for a walk with a small dog which she led by a chain. She gave Nell a sixpence, but as soon as she was out of sight a rough lad went up and took it from her. Jack did his best to stop him, but he was too small and weak, and all the poor boy took home with him that day was the black eye the lad gave him.

"Come, then, Nell and Jack, let us see what we can do; and we will not be long, John, and I hope we may bring you back some nice food;" and with slow, sad steps John Keen's wife went down the stairs.

When they went out in the street Mrs. Keen struck up the first notes of "Home, Sweet Home," and Nell and Jack sang too. Mrs. Keen had not much of a voice, but Jack and Nell had both a good ear, and sang well in time.

Up one street and down the next they went. Now and then a child would stand and look at them, but no one else paid the least heed to them. Nell held out her hand in vain; they who went by did not, or would not, see it.

"You must go to some of the shops and beg," said Mrs. Keen at last to Jack and Nell. She did not like to go herself. There was once a time when she had been well off as cook in a large house—and it was hard for her to feel that now she had to beg.

Times had been bad with the Keens. At first the man could get no work to do; then they were short of food, and John Keen grew ill; and so things went on from bad to worse. Soon they had to give up their own nice house, and take two rooms, then it came to one room, and then all that they could part with they had to sell.

Ah! it is sad to think of what the poor have to go through, and lots of times through no fault of their own.

Keen and his wife might have gone to the work house, where they would have had food to eat and clothes to wear, but they would not do so. They did not wish to give up their home, poor though it was.

Nell went to the shops on the right side of the street, and Jack to those on the left. From two or three shops Jack was sent off, but one he came to at last had no one in it. It was a shop where all kinds of things were sold—brooms, wood, sweets, tea, and loaves of bread.

The bell on the back of the door rang as Jack went in, and though he stood there for some time, no one came. He did so hope the shop was kept by some one who was kind, and would give him some of that nice new bread. At last he thought they must all be out, so he went to the door to go out, but first took off the shelf, and lay at it from the floor. He bent down to pick it up, and when it was in his hands the thought came to him, "Why should he not take some?" and some day he would come back and pay for it; they must have food, or they would die." So out of the shop he ran with the loaf.

This was one wrong thing he had done, and now he found he must tell a lie to hide it, and he told Mrs. Keen "a kind man in the shop gave it to him."

She was so glad of it, and said:

"Let us go home, and give some of it to dad at once."

Nell came up just then with fourpence, and with this they bought some milk to take home as well.

Poor John Keen was far worse when they got back. It was clear his last hour was come.

Mrs. Keen gave her babe to Nell to take care of, while she sat down by the man, and made him sup some of the milk; he could not eat, but he put out his hand, took hers, and gave her a last kiss, and said, "Be a good boy, Jack, when I am gone." Then he gave Nell and the babe a kiss too, and [illegible] his wife in his arms, dead.

[illegible] on her. It had come [illegible] to poor John Keen. She [illegible] and the cries with which Nell and Jack at the sight of death took from them all wish for the food of which they were so much in need.

Then there was a noise, the sound of a man's foot on the stairs, and a man's voice in loud tones, "The young thief shall [illegible] that's all I can say," and then [illegible] back.

Jack heard the words, though Mrs. Keen did not; and as he rose to his feet the man came in, and said, "Come now, you young rogue——;" but that was all he said, for the sight of the dead man, and the poor wife and bairns in tears, with the loaf not out on the floor, told him too well the sad tale; and his next words were, "Poor things! what can I do to help you?"

Mrs. Keen told him of their grief and want, and he found out by her tale that she knew not that Jack stole that loaf from his shop.

"Poor boy! she shall not learn it from me," he said to himself. "It was wrong of him to steal it," but he felt he could not scold and blame him at such a time. So he took up the loaf, broke a piece off, and said to Jack, "Now, my boy, eat some bread, it will do you good: it was my loaf once, and now it is yours. When you have done it, come with me, and I will see what can be done for you all."

As the kind man went down the street with Jack by his side they met a rich man, Mr. Wells, who had with him his child Grace. And when Jack saw her he knew her to be the same who had once put the sixpence in Nell's hand, when they had met her while out for a walk with her pet dog.

"Oh, sir," said the man, "can I speak to you?"

"Yes, Brown," said Mr. Wells; "what do you want with me?"

Then Brown told him the Keens' sad tale, and Mr. Wells said at once he would be glad to help them, and so he gave him a sovereign to spend on food and clothes for them.

That was not all he did. He sent Jack and Nell to school, and got some work for Mrs. Keen to do.

That loaf was the first thing Jack stole, and I am glad to say it was the last; and no one who deals at the boot shop of "John Keen & Son" would think that the head of the firm could once have been so poor as to be in want of food.

OUT IN A SNOW-STORM.

BY AUNT MARY.

YES, it was a cold day, there was no doubt of that; though the sun was bright, yet there was a hard frost.

Now and then some white clouds would pass by; they all went the same way, and the strange part of it was, when they got to one point they were no more white clouds, but just a thick grey one.

Mrs. Gay had much to do that day, and she thought she would get through her work as soon as she could, for at four o'clock her young folk were to go to the school tea, and she would have to wash and dress them all, so as to send them there neat and clean.

George, who was ten years old, had gone out to shop for her, and Kate and Flo she sent out for a walk.

Kate had the charge of Flo, and Mrs. Gay said to her as she went out of the door—

"Mind you take great care of Flo, and do not go far."

They set out hand in hand, like good girls, and had a deal to talk of as to what they should do at the "treat."

Some girls they met told them there was to be a tree, and gifts on it for each child, such as dolls, sweets, and knives.

"I want a doll," said Kate, "and if you get one, Flo, you must give it to me, and I'll give you what I get, and you shall play with my doll now and then, when I don't want it."

Flo did not seem to think this was a good plan, for she said, "If I get a doll I shall keep it, and I'll let you play with it when I do not want it."

Then Kate grew cross, and would not talk to Flo, and they went on for some time and did not say a word.

At last they came to a place where six roads met; Kate sat down on a low wall on which a fence stood, but Flo did not want to sit down.

"I'm so cold, Kate," said the child; "don't let us sit down;" and she put her hands and arms in her shawl to warm them, and her cheeks were blue with the cold, and her nose quite red.

"I shall sit here for a short time," said Kate—"I'm not cold—and then we will go down South Road."

"Oh, no, Kate," said Flo; "I don't like that way; let us go down the Mill Road.

But all Kate said was "No," and then she sat down with her back to Flo.

Flo knew how it was with Kate; when she made up her mind to do a thing she could not get her to change it, but Flo had a strong will too, and she made up her mind she would go down the Mill Road, and off she went.

But it was not the Mill Road she went down it was one like it, but it led on to the next town of Hale.

Kate did not find out she had gone till a few soft flakes of snow fell down, then she got down from the wall, and said, "Come now, Flo," but there was no Flo to be seen.

"Oh, you bad girl to go off like that!" and Kate ran down the Mill Road, where she felt sure Flo had gone, and of course she did not see her, for you know that was not the road she went down.

And then she came back to where the roads met, and went down the next one, but that was of no use; and now the snow fell so fast and thick she could not see far in front of her. What should she do? She was on the right road for home, but how dare she go back and say she had lost Flo when she had been told to take such care of her?

Mr. Gay went home at noon that day.

"I'm off work, wife," said he, "till this frost breaks; there'll be nought for us to do, and I think we shall have a thick fall of snow in a few hours' time;" and his words soon came true, for ere long roofs and roads all had on them a thick, soft, white sheet of snow.

Still Kate and Flo had not come back, and at last Mr. Gay said he should go and look for them, and he took George with him.

He had not been gone long when a sound of small feet made Mrs. Gay run to her door, to find Kate, her hat white with snow, and her boots all wet, but no Flo. In ran Kate, and with sobs threw her arms round Mrs. Gay's neck, who said:

"Oh, Kate, where is Flo?"

"I don't know," said Kate; "I have lost her," and for a long time Mrs. Gay could learn no more: at last, bit by bit, she heard the tale, and knew that this had come to pass half from the tiff they had had, and half from the fact that each child meant to have her own way.

At five o'clock Mr. Gay and George came back, but they brought no good news with them.

When they heard Kate's tale they went out once more, and had a look in each house near those six roads, but at none of them did they find the child, or could they hear of her at all.

The next day came round; there was still a hard frost. Mr. Gay could not go to work, he felt glad of it; he could not work whilst he was in such a state of mind.

"Make me a cup of tea, wife," said he. "I'll go out now, it is no use to stay at home."

He had not been gone much more than an hour when Mrs. Gay heard a knock at her door, and when she went to it she found a man there; but the man was not by himself, for Flo was with him.

"Oh, my child!" said Mrs. Gay, "where have you been?" She held her tight to her breast, whilst Flo threw her arms round her neck.

Flo could not tell her much, but the man told how he was with a flock of sheep on his way to Hale, and found the child on the road, and as the snow fell fast at the time, and was then quite deep, he had not the heart to let her stay; but he could not leave the sheep so as to bring her back to Haines, so he took her up in his arms and kept her warm in his great coat, and took her on with him to Hale.

His home was at Hale, and his wife took care of the child that night.

He would have brought her back last night, he said, but the snow was so deep that the trains could not run. How glad Mr. Gay was when he came; he felt that no words of his could thank the man who had been so good and kind to his dear child.

HOME RECREATIONS.

Among the most pleasing of home recreations are those afforded by the arts and sciences. A collection of engravings, which everyone can make gradually and at a trifling expense, affords an inexhaustible source of not only innocent but improving recreation. The stereoscope, of all recently-invented optical instruments, is one of the most beautiful. Microscopes are made so cheaply that one might well be found in every parlor; and the collection of insects and curious vegetable and mineral productions for examination would pleasantly occupy many an idle hour.

But, if you have not a microscope, a very good one can readily be made of a pretty high power, and sufficient for the examination of small objects, thus: Take a sheet of lead, about a sixteenth of an inch in thickness. Make a perfectly round hole in it, of from an eighth to a quarter of an inch in diameter. Drop in this hole a drop of perfectly pure water, and you will have a double-convex lens as perfect as can be made by art, and of a high magnifying power.

Narrow strips of glass, such as glaziers cut from panes in fitting them, may also be melted at the end into little globules, which answer very well for examining small objects.

One of the prettiest things in the world is the camera-obscura. It may be constructed in various ways. Make a room perfectly dark, excepting an opening in a blind an inch across, and you will have an inverted picture of the external landscape, in all its beautiful colors, on the opposite wall, or on a white curtain.

A more perfect picture but on a smaller scale, is found by placing a convex lens—an old spectacle glass will answer—in the opening, or over it on the outside, and receiving the picture on a sheet of thin oiled paper; or with a looking-glass it may be thrown down upon a table, which should be covered with a white cloth. The camera-obscura is formed upon the same principle as the eye; and the picture of external Nature is like that which is painted upon the retina.

There are some experiments in physics, as modified by the will, which are full of wonder and amusement. Here is one which science has never been able to explain:

Let one person lie down upon the floor. Select four others, who must stand, one at each shoulder, and one at each thigh. They all stoop; and placing the forefinger of each hand under the shoulders and thighs, attempt to raise the person from the floor. This can be done by a particular process. At a signal given by one selected to direct the experiment, the five persons, including the one to be lifted, draw in their breaths together, and breathe out the same way—three full inspirations, followed by three full expirations. If all has been done properly, at the third expiration the person on the floor may be lifted slowly, and with scarcely any apparent effort, upon the points of the eight fingers as high as they can reach.

The persons lifting are not conscious of raising more than a weight of two or three pounds, while the person lifted has a sensation of buoyancy, as if he were rising on air cushions. If a person outside touches one of those who are lifting, with so much as the lightest touch of the finger, it appears to break the spell, and the individual who was rising so pleasantly into the air falls through the fingers suddenly and violently upon the floor.

No scientific man has given any explanation of this phenomenon. It does not matter in the least how heavy the person is who is lifted: there is no perceptible difference between a man of a hundred weight or one of three hundred. Nor does the strength of those who lift appear to make any difference. They must be in earnest, and follow the directions and the signals of the leader.

A piece of pine half an inch thick, twelve or fourteen inches in length, and made to taper to the ends, may be made to rest, each end on a wine-glass. Now, if struck down with a quick blow, the stick may be broken in two without breaking the glasses.

On the same principle a man may lie on the floor, or across two chairs, place a heavy rock or a light anvil upon his stomach, and allow it to be hammered with a heavy blacksmith's hammer, when it looks to the spectators as if every blow would take his life.

These experiments are of easy explanation, as they depend upon the inertia of matter and the gradual distribution of forces.

But who can explain the action of the boomerang?—a crooked stick which the native Australian will throw around a house or a tree, so that it will come back to his feet.

You can make a sort of boomerang with pasteboard. Take a piece four or five inches square; cut it so as to leave two arms an inch wide like a letter L.

Lay this on a book so that one end will project over the side about an inch. Strike it smartly with a small rod, and it will go flying a short distance, stop, hover in the air a moment, and come back to your feet.

An instantaneous and intense light has sometimes been sprung upon a party so as to produce consternation and amusement, according to circumstances. Suppose the room darkened for any ostensible object—such, for example, as the exhibition of the magic lantern.

Have in a small plate a few grains of equal parts of powdered loaf-sugar and chlorate of potash, mixed together. Touch the powder with a drop of sulphuric acid, and you have a light so intense that the eyes can scarcely bear it.

There are numerous of beautiful experiments in chemistry, magnetism, and electricity, which afford a fund of amusement and instruction. A French naturalist said he could spend a whole life-time with pleasure and profit in examining so much of the earth as he could cover with his hand.

With the vast domain of science open to us, we can surely never want for amusement.

HOW TO EAT WISELY.—As a universal rule in health, and with very rare exceptions in disease, that is best to be eaten which the appetite craves or the taste relishes. Persons rarely err in the quality of food eaten; Nature's instincts are the wisest regulators in this respect.

The great sources of disease arise from eating more than [illegible] quantity, frequency, regularity, or from transgressing the particular dietetic rules which make human life a burden, a curse, and bring death. By eating [illegible] to much, or too often, or at irregular times, there is a fatal, and [illegible] overflowing [illegible] we all know it. But the most important reason of all, the last to be small word before it be has been allowed to [illegible] into the stomach, is [illegible] with the teeth, for, [illegible] a mouthful of water, [illegible] the better, the sooner they are digested.

It has been seen with the naked eye that food [illegible] upon the powers as much as half a day, it digests almost as soon, without being observed at all, as if it had been well masticated. The best, and the only [illegible] for all persons thus to communicate their food; for, even if it is well chewed, the comminution is no injury, while it is of very great importance in case of hurry, [illegible] poor bad teeth.

It is easier to see the harm done by anger or violence than that produced by overwork or over-indulgence. We know some of the effects of deception or slander, while we do not know what may follow from an enfeebled physical system. One thing, however, we do know, that every broken law brings its penalty, not only to the transgressor, but through him to the world, and the laws of our bodies form no exception. We often hear it said, "I ought not to have gone out so thinly clad," "I ought not to have worked so protracedly," "I ought not to have eaten such and such things, or at such and such times," and yet but little shame is felt at confessions, and but little, if any, reproach is incurred; yet as soon as we know what to do or avoid, we incur actual guilt in taking the opposite course. The very expression of the word "ought" admits this, although we use it again and again with regard to physical transgressions without feeling disgraced.

If you would teach secrecy to others; begin with yourself.

THE SNOW FLAKE.

BY E. P. PELLEW.

Like a cloud upon a mountain,
Like a bubble on a fountain,
I am seen and pass away as in a dream,
For the wild wind drives me ever,
Over land, and sea, and river,
Till the sunshine shall dissolve me in its beam.

I am swept on the wings of the storm,
And I rush 'twixth the earth and the sky,
The earth that seems shapeless in form,
And the moon that is clouded on high;
I rush o'er the ocean's dark waste,
And the white spray leaps upwards to me,
Till I feel in its kiss as we mingle, the taste
Of the salt of the boisterous sea.

I pass o'er a ship,
And I hover and dip,
'Midst the masts, and the sails, and the shrouds;
But the wind, with a whirl,
Makes me eddy and curl,
And bears me once more to the clouds.

From the place of my birth,
I swoop downwards to earth,
I am borne o'er the plaid and the hill,
And I long for my rest,
In the ground's snow-clad breast,
Or a home in the stream or the rill.

OMENS, CHARMS, ETC.

In the opinion of the Egyptian King Nechepsus, who reigned 630 B.C., a green jasper cut into the form of a dragon surrounded by rays, would, if suspended from the neck, promote digestion in the wearer.

Coming to a later period, amulets were made of the wood of the true Cross about A.D. 328. Boyle, the philosopher, assures us that he found an amulet of moss which had grown in a dead man's skull, the best remedy for a copious bleeding at the nose to which he had been long subjected.

Burton praises some amulets while deprecating the use of others. He writes: "I say they are not to be altogether rejected. Peony doth cure epilepsy; a spider helps the ague; and precious stones most diseases." Roger Bacon, too, firmly believed in their efficacy.

The anodyne necklace, which consists of beads, formed from the roots of white briony, and is sometimes hung around the necks of infants, with a view of assisting their teething, is an instance of the still surviving confidence in the mediæval virtue of amulets. The caul is an amulet, and such is the belief of seafaring people in them, that it is said by such: "A child's caul will preserve their ship from being lost and they from being drowned."

It is related by Josephus, that when Solomon discovered a particular herb, which he believed to be efficacious in the cure of epilepsy, he considered it advisable to employ the aid of a charm, either to increase its power or to popularize its merits. The root, or herb, was concealed in a ring, and applied to the nostrils of the afflicted; wonderful cures were thus wrought. Josephus, declares that he himself was present at the successful application of an amulet by a Jewish priest, when the Emperor Vespasian and the Tribunes of the army were co witnesses of the experiment.

More famous amulets were, however, those coins called the money of Saint Helena. They were so named from one side bearing the effigy of Saint Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine. They, again, had a special reputation for the cure of epilepsy. As such, according to an author of the sixteenth century, one was worn by no less a personage than the Sultan Amurath. It is probable that one of the Christian Kings was no less a believer, for, in the wardrobe account of the fifty-fifth year of Henry III., among the valuables in charge of the keeper, is enumerated a silken purse containing some of these coins.

In Greece, credence in the curative qualities of the amulet, though common, was not universal. Theophrastus broadly declared Pericles insane, when that General was observed wearing an amulet. The derision of Theophrastus does not seem to have affected Pericles, for we find in Plutarch, that when the famous Athenian was ill, he mutely pointed out an amulet to the friends who visited him, intimating by the action, not only the fact of his indisposition, but also a confidence in the means of cure.

In Rome on the contrary, amulets were of general adoption. There, plants, gathered at the prescribed seasons, were deemed of superior power to minerals. Mount Colchis had an extensive reputation for producing the mysterious herbs; but Mount Caucasus is mentioned by Ovid as of even superior fame. So confident were the Romans in the power of their amulets that, when they failed in their effect, the mischance was ascribed, not to any fault in the charms, but to some mistake in their preparation. It is probable that, in the opinion of the Emperors, this general credence of the Romans, by increasing the superstition, diminished the energies of the people; certain it is that from some cause the Emperor Caracalla, in the decline of the Empire, prohibited the use of amulets.

In Babylon, the wearing of amulets assumed the character of an institution. From Plutarch we learn that the soldiers wore rings, on which an insect resembling a bee was inscribed: the judges suspended from their necks a figure of Truth, composed of emeralds; and other forms, for various purposes were in common fashion.

Talismans are very much akin to amulets. These consist of a figure cut in stone or cast in metal, and made with certain superstitious ceremonies when two planets are in conjunction, or when a certain star is at its culminating point. They were probably used originally to avert disease, for we find them mentioned in the history of medicine among all ancient nations.

Christians were not even exempt from similar beliefs. In the Middle Ages, relics of saints, consecrated candles, rods, rosaries, etc., were thus employed, as they are still, in some parts of Spain.

The talisman of our day, that of Charlemagne, is in possession of the late Empress of the French. Its pedigree is undoubted, having been found fastened round the neck of Charlemagne at the opening of his tomb. It was appropriated by the Town Council of Aix-la-Chapelle, and by them presented to the first Emperor. He, in turn, made a gift of it to Hortense, the first Napoleon's step-daughter, at whose death it came by descent to the husband of the present owner. It is somewhat larger than a walnut; the centre is composed of two rough sapphires—which stone is said to repel gout and ague, and endow the wearer with courage—a portion of the Holy Cross, and some other relics of the Holy Land. These are enclosed in a filigree work of fine gold, set with rare gems.

To do the right thing, demands sensitive thoughtfulness, large tact, and a secret reasonableness which neither flies at erroneous conclusions through rash precipitancy or arrives at them by way of personal prejudices. The man who can lay claim to this rare distinction, must be able to perceive the value of a question in all its bearings; he must be above the blind egotism which prevents a man from appreciating how a situation looks to those concerned, whose opinions and interests differ from his own; he must possess taste in a high degree, and above all, he must be far-seeing. An act thus with him will be the result of a careful and dispassionate consideration of the consequences which are likely to follow it, since the right thing is but seldom the most obvious one, and it is the one which leads to the most satisfactory results.

Grains of Gold.

What is not needed is dear at a farthing. Ask thy purse what thou shouldst buy.

He who avoids temptation avoids the sin.

One always has time enough, if one will apply is.

A silent man's words are not brought into court.

Let your anger set with the sun, but not rise with it.

Apply the Golden Rule to your every act and thought.

The road to destruction is paved with good intentions.

The maintaining of one vice costeth more than ten virtues.

In order to judge of another's feelings, remember your own.

The most manifest sign of wisdom is continued cheerfulness.

The great rule of moral conduct is, next to God, to respect time.

Man, there be who buy nothing with their money but repentance.

He that labors is tempted by one devil; he that is idle, by a thousand.

Flatter not thyself in thy faith to God, if thou wantest charity for thy neighbor.

The more any one speaks of himself, the less he likes to hear another talked of.

As to the pure all things are pure, even so to the impure all things are impure.

Femininities.

Why was eve not afraid of the measles? Because she'd Adam.

The statement that "all's fair in love" is repudiated by the brunettes.

To see what is right and not do it is want of courage or of principle.

The Southern girls in Washington have formed a club—"The Dixie Cotillion."

In the year 1770 the practice of visiting not in person, but by cards, was introduced from France.

Three million women work for money in this country. The other millions make work for the men.

In the best circles, it is said, the ostentatious exhibition of wedding presents will not obtain this season.

Never strike or box a child's ears; this has been known to rupture the drum and cause incurable deafness.

Every time I speak cross and impetuously I'm weakening my nerve power and adding to the misery of others.

Marriage certificates with divorce coupons are being introduced in Chicago, and are becoming very popular.

Elaborate mourning is declared to be discouraged in the best circles, which may help reconcile some women to their affliction.

Women of beauty and wealth, and whose husbands are dead, are now referred to by the disciples of Vanity Fair as "prize widows."

There is an instinctive rivalry between women which, until it is overcome by the bonds of sympathy, is a bar to true, unselfish friendship.

A 10-months-old baby in Augusta, Me., cries hysterically every time she hears "Sweet Violets." Such critical judgment is wonderful at this age.

Never let the feet become cold and damp, or sit with the back toward a window, as these things tend to aggravate any existing hardness of hearing.

"I would not marry the best man living!" she said, and she kept her vow from the first; but she did not live to die an old maid; she married one of the worst.

Madame Boucicaut, proprietress of the famous Bon Marche of Paris, who recently presented her employees with $1,000,000, began life as a laundress in her native village.

Nellie Andrews, the pretty daughter of George Andrews, of Columbus, O., hanged herself on Christmas Eve, because her lover, Dwight H. Porter, jilted her. She was worth $15,000.

The Empress of Russia has been presented with a sewing machine of solid silver, studded with sapphires, and enclosed in a case in the form of the Imperial crown. The fittings are of gold.

He: "What a lovely fan you have, Miss Edith!" She: "Yes, I like it. My papa gave it to me. It came from Paris and is hand-painted." He: "Indeed! And how nicely it matches your complexion!"

Mrs. Shaw, of New York, is winning fame and money as a whistler. Her services are in great demand at private entertainments in that city, and her patrons are among the most prominent society people.

Proud mother, haughtily: "You allowed yourself to be won altogether too easily, Edith!" Edith: "I suppose I did. But as Albert is rather bashful, and I am nearing 30, I thought it only proper to make it as easy as possible for him."

"See here, Georgie," said a fond mamma to her small son, as they walked on the beach, "what a lot of nice small round stones." "Yes," grumbled Georgie, as he cast a searching glance around, "and not a single thing to throw 'em at."

She: "I hope, Mr. Flunk, we will have the pleasure of your society at our reception?" He, with self-abnegation: "Aw, weally, my life is devoted to the gentle sex—of course I'll be there—I—aw—never consult my own happiness on such occasions."

Probably the most costly umbrella ever made was the one a Paris manufacturer prepared for the Princess Eurcole. The stick was beautifully inlaid with gold, and the handle was a solid piece of the same metal, upon which sparkled beautiful jewels. It cost nearly $10,000.

It is permissible now for ladies to appear in the streets with cats. They must be shaggy, long-haired Angora cats, as big as fat pugs, and costing more than a thousand ordinary back-yard cats would fetch. They are decked with collars and carried in the arms, because no matter how aristocratic and costly a cat is it will not suffer itself to be led by a string.

"Why don't you get insured for the benefit of your wife? You love her, I presume?" "Love her? Yes, sir; I love her better than my life. And that's just the reason I don't insure my life. I don't value it a straw in comparison with my dear wife, so I've taken out a policy on her life." "Payable to yourself?" "Certainly. A man insures what he values most. And if she should die wouldn't I be the loser?"

Katie Kennedy, of Cincinnati, the pretty sister of a young man who is now in the Southern Indiana Penitentiary, under a life sentence for murder, is so convinced of her brother's innocence that for three years she has been a truant from home, and in the disguise of a man has been the constant companion of thieves in the hopes of obtaining a confession which will set free the convict. Her adventures have been most romantic.

Mary A. Hutcheson, of Knoxville, Tenn., was wooed in marriage by Wesley Thompson and J. M. Buckley. They wanted to settle the matter by a fight. The girl informed them she could not consent to that, but said the one who could get a marriage license and return to her first should be the groom. Then a race for a bride began. Both lovers got the licenses and were close together on the return trip. By a mishap to Buckley's horse, Thompson secured the prize by 3 minutes, and the knot was tied.

Masculinities.

Bear with, and not magnify, each other's infirmities.

Better a little chiding than a great deal of heart-break.

A man who does business on a large scale—A coal dealer.

Men expect more in return for their favors than women do.

He is happiest, be he king or peasant, who finds peace in his home.

It is not easy to straighten in the oak the crook that grew in the sapling.

The best hand in the game of life—The hand of a good and loving wife.

He who builds according to every man's advice will have a crooked house.

I. E. Morningstar is the editor of the "Morning Star," Sartoria, Mich.

Remember that we are all subject to failings and infirmities, of one kind or another.

The past and future are veiled; but the past wears the widow's veil, the future the virgin's.

Keep the back, especially between the shoulder blades, well covered; also the chest well protected.

To ascertain if a dog hates water, give him some city milk. If he drinks it, he is not opposed to water.

A sure way to give credit to what you know is never to decide concerning that of which you are ignorant.

The single eye-glass is, we suppose, worn by the man who can see more with one eye than he can comprehend.

Sorrow comes soon enough without despondency. It does a man no good to carry around a lightning-rod to attract trouble.

Like a beautiful flower, full of color, but without scent, are the fine but fruitless words of him who does not act accordingly.

Wherever I find a great deal of gratitude in a poor man I take it for granted there would be as much generosity if he were a rich man.

Carriages were first introduced into England in 1298, and were for a long time used only for the conveyance of the sick and of ladies.

Husband: "My dear, do you think I am conceited about my personal appearance?" Wife: "Well, yes, John, a little; most homely men are, you know."

"Do you believe in luck, my good man?" asked a superstitious old lady of a tramp. "I can't say that I do, mum," replied the tramp, "because I've never had any."

Never stand still in cold weather, especially after having taken a slight degree of exercise, and always avoid standing on ice or snow, or where the person is exposed to cold wind.

"I shouldn't care to marry a woman who knows more than I do," he remarked. "Oh, Mr. De Happy," she replied, with a coquettish shake of the fan, "I am afraid you are a confirmed bachelor."

Wife, to unhappy husband: "I wouldn't worry, John; it doesn't do any good to borrow trouble." Husband: "Borrow trouble! Great Cæsar, my dear, I ain't borrowing trouble; I've got it to lend."

Wife, pleadingly: "I'm afraid, George, you do not love me as well as you used to do." Husband: "Why?" "Because you always let me get up to light the fire." "Nonsense, my love! Your getting up to light the fire makes me love you all the more."

A young woman of Bangor, Me., who had been forbidden by a jealous suitor to go to a dance with a rival, had the jealous swain arrested and lodged in a cell, and she went to the dance with the other fellow.

A young lady wishes to know if she can can tell anything about a gentleman by the color of his eyes. We should not like to risk any positive reply, but will venture to say that something can be determined by the color of his nose.

Colonel Yerger: "Why is it that the ladies of a congregation always present the pastor with embroidered slippers and suspenders?" Mrs. Yerger: "The suspenders are to keep up his trousers, so that the embroidered slippers can be seen. How stupid you are!"

If Edison perfects his phonograph the young men of the coming generation won't dare to go courting Sunday night for fear that one of the instruments may be concealed in the parlor. It would be difficult to overcome the evidence of the phonograph in a breach of promise trial.

A plain man often looks with envy on one who has risen to place and power; but, if he could see all the steps that have been taken to bring him there, or all the perplexities that surround him now that he is there, he would not barter his present peace of mind for the coveted greatness.

"How are you and your wife coming on?" asked a gentleman of a colored man. "She has run me off, boss." "What's the matter?" "It is to blame, boss. I gave her a splendid white silk dress, and den she got so proud she had no use for me. She said I was too dark to match de dress."

Everything holy is before what is unholy; guilt presupposes innocence, not the reverse; angels, but not fallen ones, were created. Hence man does not properly rise to the highest, but first sinks gradually down from it, and thus afterwards rises again; a child can never be considered too innocent and good.

The domestic relations precede, and, in our present existence, are worth more than all our other social ties. They give the first throb to the heart, and unseal the deep fountains of its love. Home is the chief school of human virtue. Its responsibilities, joys, sorrows, smiles, tears, hopes and solicitudes form the chief interest of human life.

Recent Book Issues.

A most novel, convenient, and valuable business calendar for 1888 is the "Columbia Bicycle Calendar and Stand," just issued by the Pope Manufacturing Co., of Boston, Mass. In this calendar a new departure has been made, decidedly unique and different from any previous attempt in calendar construction.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

The English Illustrated Magazine, as usual, makes a specialty of fine engravings. Hugh Thomson and Herbert Railton have drawn the old inns and ancient houses on the line of the Exeter road, in Outram Tristram's 'Coaching Days and Coaching Ways." Katharine Macquoid's "Antwerp" is charmingly illustrated with views of the Place Verte, the Maison Charles-Quint and the court-yard of the Musee Plantain, a storehouse of beautiful Old World objects. Linda Villari contributes "San Martino di Castrozza," an illustrated sketch of the South Tyrol. "That Girl in Black" by Mrs. Molesworth, is entertaining even in its fragmentary state. Professor Minto continues his historical novel, "Et Cetera," and the editorial department makes gentle fun of the American anxiety to make out that Shakespeare was Bacon. Published by Macmillan, New York.

The Forum for January has an excellent table of contents. "Shall We Call Him Master?" by Prof. J. P. Lesley, is an eloquent and impressive study of the character of Jesus and of the Christian religion as the surest basis of the American government. "Should the Churches be Free?" is an earnest protest against the present renting system. Other papers are: "The Debt of the Old World to the New," by Prof. E. A. Freeman; "What Shall the Public Schools Teach?" by Rev. M. J. Savage; "The Admission of Utah," by Senator Dawes; "International Legal Tender," by the Duke of Marlborough; "Concerning Women," by Prof. Geo. J. Romanes; "Defects in Our Consular Service," by Perry Belmont; "The Congestion of Cities," by Rev. E. E. Hale; "Books that Have Helped Me," by Moncure D. Conway; "Mr. Gladstone's Claims to Greatness," by Dickinson S. Miller. Terms $5 a year. Published at 97 Fifth avenue, New York.

The American Magazine for January is full of good things. Cape Breton Island, with its quaint inhabitants and primitive scenery, is described by F. M. Endlich. The question of granting further pensions to soldiers is discussed by Col. E. H. Ropes. Hamlin Garland, in a sketch, "Huskin' Time," draws a vivid picture of his boyhood farm experience: "An Old Dude" offers "Suggestions to Dudes;" F. L. Perine describes in an illustrated article a Brooklyn homestead; Wm. H. Rideing contributes the first of a series of short papers on "Boston Artists and Their Studios;" Alice Wellington Rollins explains what is meant by "Manual Training in Schools;" presents entertaining facts about the songs and habits of the American nightingale. The leading poems is "Twilight at Nazareth" by Joaquin Miller; verse is also contributed by Margaret H. Lawless and others, while the departments are excellent. The American Magazine Co., 749 Broadway, New York.

Whittier's beautiful poem, telling the legend of "The Brown Dwarf of Rugen," opens the January *St. Nicholas*. It is illustrated by the frontispiece and other drawings. Mrs. Burnett continues her fascinating story, "Sara Crewe; or, What Happened at Miss Minchin's," with excellent illustrations; and Mr. Stockton concludes "The Clock of Rondaine." Mrs. Pennell gives an amusing description of the "London Christmas Pantomimes," with drawings by Mr. Pennell. An interesting character-sketch is called "Poor Mr. Brown." There is a novel article, telling of "The Amusements of Arab Children." Nora Perry has a poem, "Balboa," which is well illustrated by Frank Day. Other features of the number are a description of "A Girl's Military Company;" a seasonable story, telling "Where the Christmas-tree Grew," "The Peasant King," "The Letter Cake," "What did the Butcher-Boy Say?" the first of a series of "Housekeeping Songs," set to music; poems, verses and pictures. The Century Co., New York.

It is of little consequence in a march whether a man is near the head or rear of the column, but it is all-important that his face be turned in the right way, and that his feet falter not in the path. There is no fallacy so great as that which despondency suggests, that, because the way is long or the road is hard, or because others have had to go so far, it is not worth while to take the steps that are possible. All the grand results of human achievement have come simply from each one's doing from day to day what he could. This is all that is demanded of each one. Society has the right to expect it, and the individual is bound to find it. His own prosperity and happiness, no less than that of the community, are involved in it.

A Boston bootblack has a sign bearing the following words on his stand in Blackstone street: "Pedal tegiments artistically illuminated, lebricated, and embellished for the infinitesimal compensation or remuneration of five cents per operation."

Beware of counterfeits. Salvation Oil will cure your aches and pains. Price 25 cts.

It is important to check a cough at once. Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup will do so. 25 cts.

FAIRS, WAKES, AND MOPS.

FAIRS, Wakes, Mops, Rush-bearings, and Village Feasts all belong to the same genus, and are generally believed to be of Saxon origin; but are all, more or less, shrouded by the mists of antiquity.

The old English wake was the equivalent of the ecclesiastical vigil—the eve of a religious festival or holiday. The parish wake was kept in the church, on the anniversay of the saint to whom the church was dedicated, and, in the churchyard, tents were erected to supply cakes and ale for the use of the crowd on the morrow's holiday.

These wakes, however, soon came to be scenes of indulgence and riot; and from the time of Henry I. to that of Henry VIII., a long string of statutes was passed, forbidding convivial meetings and fairs in the churchyards.

Church ales were also amongst past enormities, and even at the present day, in remote country parishes, the phantom of a wake, wholly unsanctioned by the church, puts in, once a year, a pale and fitful appearance.

In Italy, these festivals were introduced about the year 500 A.D., and in England, it is supposed, about 886. Fairs were established in France about the year 800, by Charlemagne; and encouraged in England by William the Conqueror—1066-87.

In all parts of the country these fairs were the great market days of the year; indeed, all fairs were originally markets—a sort of commercial rendezvous, rendered necessary by the sparseness of the population and the paucity of business. Merry-making and shows were only the incidental accompaniments of these events. Now that the population is dense and commercial communications of all kinds are active and easy, the country fair is no longer a necessity.

All over the North of England these fairs are popular institutions still, and, over one hundred years ago, they were the only real holidays of the simple-minded rustics.

Feats of strength and dexterity came to be one of the accustomed features at the fairs, and old scores were settled on such occasions. There were no prizes offered for skill in husbandry as now, and free-fights between rival husbandmen, boxing matches and contentions with the quarter-staff—the Irish shillelagh—were to be seen as the concomitants of a fair. By this most doubtful means the question of superiority was definitely settled.

Up to almost the close of the last century games or matches at cudgels were of frequent occurrence, and public subscriptions were entered into for the purpose of finding the necessary funds to provide prizes. Men at these meetings often won their sweethearts by the dexterity they displayed in the use of the cudgel or quarter-staff.

For centuries mountebanks were the most prominent personages at fairs and wakes, taking up their stand in prominent places where the crowd was sure to be the thickest. They were men of boundless wit and extraordinary impudence. The cures they effected were only equalled in their extraordinary character by the compounds they dispensed. Our forefathers must have been filled to the full with simple faith to judge by the manner in which the compounds of nastiness, harmless enough it is true, found ready purchasers.

Fairs were occasionally granted to towns as a means of enabling them to recover from the effects of war and other disasters, and as a mark of favor from the Crown. Charters were also granted for charitable purposes, since we find from ancient records that Stourbridge Fair, once, perhaps, next to Coventry, the largest fair in the world, was specially granted by King John for the maintenance of a hospital for lepers.

About the introduction of rush-bearings there is no doubt whatever; it is an institution of more ancient date. Rushes were employed at a period anterior to the introduction of carpets, to strew upon the floor, and the strewing of churches grew up into a religious festival, when "young women, dressed in white and carrying garlands of flowers and rushes, walked in procession to the Parish Church, accompanied by a crowd of rustics, with flags flying and music playing. There they suspend their floral chaplets on the chancel rails, and the day is concluded with a simple feast."

The introduction of carpets and matting did away with the necessity for employing rushes; but the holding of the feast is still maintained in many places.

At many places the fairs were, and are still, opened by displaying a gigantic glove from some conspicuous place. The origin of this custom cannot now be very accurately ascertained; but it is probable that, before charters were granted, the King sent a glove as his warrant for the holding of a fair. The lowering of the glove marked the termination of the fair.

Formerly a fair at Liverpool was thus opened, and while the glove was exposed in front of the Town Hall, all persons coming to the fair were perfectly safe from any danger of being arrested for debt.

A Texas paper has the following plaintive appeal: "If the gentlemen who tarred and feathered us last Saturday night will kindly return our clothes, they will confer a lasting favor. We are still wearing the feathers, and while, owing to the thoroughness of our fellow-citizens' work, they are quite comfortable for house wear, still the gentlemen who have come out with a full feather suit are so few that our appearance on the street in the costume would be sure to cause remarks."

The smallest act of charity shall stand us in great stead.

Beliefs and Omens.—Byron was a firm believer in omens and unlucky days. The first time he saw Miss Millbank, the future wife of the bard, was at the house of a lady of title. On going upstairs he stumbled, and remarked to Moore, his future biographer, who accompanied him, that it predicted no good. Having married this lady, and the marriage proving very unfortunate, Byron remarked that he ought to have taken warning of that omen.

On receiving a note informing him of the decease of his old physician, Polidori, Byron remarked, "I was convinced something very unpleasant hung over me last night. I expected to hear that somebody I knew was dead; so it turned out. Who can help being superstitious? Scott believed in second sight. Rousseau tried whether he would be damned or not by aiming at a tree with a stone. Goethe trusted to a chance of a knife's striking the water whether he was to succeed in some undertaking."

On another occasion Byron remarked, "Several extraordinary things happened on my birthday; so they did to Napoleon; and a more wonderful circumstance still occurred to Marie Antoinette. At my wedding something whispered to me that I was signing my death warrant. At the last moment I would have retreated if I could have done so. I am a great believer in presentiment. Socrates' demon was no fiction; Monk Lewis had his monitor, and Bonaparte many warnings."

Byron partook of the superstition that Friday was an unlucky day for the commencement of any work. Soon after his arrival at Pisa, a lady of his acquaintance, happening to meet him on the road from her house, as she was herself returning thither, and supposing that he had been to pay her a visit, requested that he would go back with her.

"I have not been to your house," he answered; "for just before I got to the door I remembered that it was Friday, and not liking to pay my visit on a Friday, I turned back."

It is even related that the poet once sent away a Genoese tailor who brought him home a new coat on the same ominous day. With all this, strange to say, Byron set sail for Greece on a Friday; and though, by some who have any leaning to this superstitious fancy, the result may be thought too sadly confirmatory of the omen, it is plain that either the influence of the superstition on his own mind was slight, or in the excitement of self-devotion, under which he then acted, was forgotten.

The Orloff Diamond.—This magnificent gem which in its rough state formed the eye of an idol in a temple near Trichinopoli, was stolen by a Frenchman, who escaped with his prize to Persia. Fearful of being discovered, he was glad to dispose of his ill-gotten gear for a sum about two thousand pounds sterling. The man who bought the stone, a Jewish merchant, sold it to one Shafras, an astute Armenian, for twelve thousand pounds sterling. Shafras had conceived the idea that by carrying the stone to Russia, he would obtain from the Empress Catharine the Great a princely sum for it. How to travel in safety with the stone, the theft of which had of course been discovered and proclaimed, became a grave consideration. It was too large to swallow, and no mode of concealment presented itself to Shafras that seemed secure from discovery. The way in which he solved the problem was remarkable. He made a deep incision in the fleshy part of his left leg, in which he inserted the stone, closing the wound by carefully sewing it up with silver thread. When the wound healed, the Armenian merchant set out on his travels quite boldly, and although more than once apprehended, rigorously searched, and even tortured a little, he was obdurate, and firmly denied having the stone in his possession. Having at length reached his destination, he asked from the Empress the sum of forty thousand pounds for the gem, an amount of money which Catharine was unable to raise at the moment. We next find the Armenian at Amsterdam with the intention of having his diamond cut. Here the stone was seen by Count Orloff, who determined to purchase it for presentation to his royal mistress, the Empress Catharine. The sum ultimately paid for the gem was about seventy thousand sterling in cash, together with an annuity of five hundred pounds, and a patent of nobility. Shafras flourished exceedingly, and died a millionaire. Such, in brief, is the story of the Orloff Diamond.

Making Macaroni.—Macaroni is either a cheap or expensive dish, as desired. You may use it as the Genoese, Venetians and Neapolitans use it, or you can make the dish as expensive as any other. It is made simply from flour and water—nothing else. It should be made from the best flour, and that of a special kind.

You often see a very yellow kind of macaroni, and some people imagine this is better or more healthy, but this is merely imaginary. This yellowish color is produced by saffron, and not by eggs, as some believe. Saffron is very dear, and often sells for $15 to $20 the pound, merely for coloring purposes, as it has no taste or strength to it; but a tea-spoonful of it will color a barrel of flour a beautiful yellow.

It is dissolved in water, and then the dough is made with this water. This dough is run through rollers, which press it so thin and hard that it is very tough. It is then driven by steam through a cylinder about eighteen inches in diameter, which has a die at the bottom about one and a half inch thick, in which are a thousand and one little holes, through which are very small wires.

By powerful steam pressure the dough, after becoming heated, is forced through the bottom of this cylinder, and these little wires make the holes in the macaroni. A man gathers the pipes into bundles, cuts them off, and lays them over a rod to dry.

Origin of Words.—Two military terms have curious origins. "Sentinel" has been traced through Italian to the Latin *sentina*, the hold of a ship, and is thus equivalent to the Latin *sentinator*, the man who pumps bilge-water out of a ship.

It is curious to mark how the name of a naval official of whom constant vigilance was required has been wholly transferred to a post requiring equal watchfulness in the sister service. The other name to which we would call attention is "hussar," an Hungarian word signifying "twentieth."

In explanation of this derivation, it is related that when Matthias Corvinus ascended to the Hungarian throne in 1458, the dread of imminent foreign invasion caused him to command an immediate levy of troops.

The cavalry he raised by a decree ordering that one man should be enrolled out of "twenty" in every village, who should provide among themselves for his subsistence and pay.

Some words have passed from a literal to a figurative sense, and have thus become much wider in signification. Thus, "villain" originally meant merely a farm servant; "pagan," a dweller in a village; "knave," a boy; "idiot," a private person; "heathen," a dweller on a heath; "gazette," a small coin; and "brat," a rag or clout, especially a child's bib or apron. "Treacle" meant an antidote against the bites of serpents; "intoxicate," to drug or poison; "coward," a bob-tailed hare; and "butcher," a slaughterer merely of he-goats. "Brand" and "stigmatise" still mean to mark with infamy, although the practical significance of the words is now chiefly a matter of history.

Under the Romans, a slave who had proved dishonest, or had attempted to run away from his master, was branded with the three letters F U R, a thief or rascal, while it may not be generally known that in England the custom of branding the cheek of a felon with an F was only abolished by statute some sixty years ago.

DIVINES DISAGREE.

A Discussion Not Decided by Prayer—Intolerance of Opinion.

The following is an extract from a late New York Tribune editorial: "There is perhaps, no mental vice so common as intolerance of opinion. Even such as think they have emancipated themselves from the clinging defect find it hard to acknowledge frankly to themselves that the opinion of some one else upon a matter they have studied may very well be as deserving of respect as their own, if it differs radically from their own. If we could all get rid of this 'last infirmity,' not only of 'noble minds,' but of nearly all human minds, how much less friction there would be in life, how much less bitterness and heart burning and envy and all uncharitableness."

In an adjoining column of the same paper was found the following peculiar commentary on the editorial:

"The bitterness of the controversy in the American Board over the question of probation after death was very great. This rather shocked the simple-minded and earnest foreign missionaries who attended the sessions of the Board, one of whom said he had always thought such questions were decided by prayer. But if the debate was not altogether Christian in spirit, it was strictly parliamentary. The brethren didn't forget to put a copy of Cushing's Manual in their valise along with their Bible, and apparently some of them consulted it oftener than the Bible."

Is it a fact that there is but little toleration in this country, and less than in others?

"Comparisons are odorous," said Mrs. Malaprop. Perhaps we have been claiming too much for this free nation.

We must admit that in the professions there is yet much of the old time prejudice against new ideas. Preachers preach the old doctrines and doctors prescribe the old medicines. Bitter controversies arise when anything new is proposed.

But the march of progress is not stayed. Men are travelling heavenward under new creeds and being cured by new medicines.

Much the same state of facts seems to exist in other countries.

When Dr. Robson, a leading physician of London, formerly of the Royal Navy, proclaimed that Warner's safe cure was a specific in kidney derangements, the bide-bound school to which he belonged threatened to debar him from practice, if he did not recant. But he replied that his statement was based on such evidence that he could not recant.

Since then, Dr. Wilson, F. R. S. E. editor of "Health," a recognized English authority, announces in his magazine that "Warner's safe cure is of a perfectly safe character and perfectly reliable." Many English physicians are now prescribing it.

The "schools" in this country still bar all proprietary medicines. But Dr. Gunn, Dean of a New York Medical College, long since published: "Warner's safe cure is a very valuable remedy;" and says he knows that many physicians prescribe it, though not by name.

Good things in creed or practice are not to be cried down by the old fogies simply because they are new. The spirit of toleration thrives on opposition.

Humorous.

"IS LIFE WORTH LIVING."

I would not let this topic pass
For all the money peers have pursed,
Before I've proved the man an ass
Who put the question first.

"Is life worth living?"—simple shrimp!
How long had he been drenched with doubt?
He batted once; what kind of limp,
I wonder, "bowled him out?"

"Is life worth living?"—pigmy man!
Had some young Venus played him false?
Concealed herself behind her fan,
And scorned him in the waltz?

"Is life worth living?"—boots be blacked,
But wherefore black the fair in face?
Was he in debt, or had he backed
The wrong horse in the race?

"Is life worth living?"—fait'ring fool!
Had he just found Ambition's ranks?—
Become a poet of the school
"Declined with many thanks?"

"Is life worth living?"—doubtful youth!
I wonder he had lived so far!
And now—had felt an aching tooth?
Or smoked his first cigar?

"Is life worth living?"—surely so!
If only just to toil and spin,
Till tides of trouble turn and go,
And tides of joy come in!

"Is life worth living?"—surely yes,
All other worthy things above!
If only lust for one brief day
To live with her you love!

"Is life worth living?"—surely yes!
If but to finger one poor penny,
And be contented ne'ertheless
As one among the many!

—U. N. Nose.

Fit to kill—Corsets.

On his metal—A newly-shod horse.

Some acrobats are fresh and somersault.

Always certain to be behindhand—The wrist.

An exhaustive article — The stomach-pump.

"Death's door" is opened with a skeleton key!

A credit table affair—The dinner that is not paid for.

A signal failure—A futile attempt to stop a street car.

The burning question of the hour—The price of coal.

Man is 80 per cent. water. That is why a boil makes him hot.

It is generally "all up" with a man when he begins to go down hill.

From the standpoint of the ousted partisan public office is a public thrust.

It's no trouble to meet a bill, or the man who brings it. The trouble is to pay it.

The wear and tear on contribution boxes is a very small item of church expenses.

It was the man who picked up the dollar which some one else dropped that met with a loss.

Getting up with the son is a common practice where there is a teething boy baby in the family.

When may a man be said to belong to the vegetable kingdom?—When experience has made him sage.

There will be 53 Sundays this year. That gives us one more day than usual in which to go fishing.

We always admired a dentist for one thing at least. He isn't afraid to say a thing right to your teeth.

A little fellow, 2 years old, who had never eaten frosted cake, asked at the table for a piece of that "cake with plastering on it."

A man who has been hanged can very properly be used to point an argument for prohibition. It is a clear case of "a drop too much."

Journalism in Texas is looking up. A San Angelo editor was not only elected as "brother" at a meeting, but was trusted to pass around the hat.

"Is a double wedding unlucky?" asks a Western exchange. Well, we should say that it is, especially if wife No. 1 finds out where wife No. 2 lives.

Will The Coming Man Take Medicine?

It is pretty certain that the coming man will be bald if he continues to wear tight hats,—and toothless if he continues to live upon soft food; and certainly near sighted, if he continues to live in cities and only use his eyes upon near objects. But there will be other changes, easily foreshadowed by the present drift of events. Faith in revulsive measures and medicines for the sick is now almost a thing of the past. Change of habits, change of food, and the use of specifics are now seen to be better. Change of the *kind* of food upon which we live, and the plentiful use of hot water—the one to build up new tissue and the other to wash out and eliminate waste and defective tissue, with the mildest use of the atomic specific does the work. Thus new tissue is formed; the old and waste is passed off: the system is rejuvenated and a new lease of life given. Lives become longer, health more vigorous and better assured. All the revulsive medicines are seen to be wasteful of life and attacks upon vitality. HUMPHREYS' SPECIFICS have been doing this pioneer work for a generation and when it is asked "will the coming man take medicine?" it may be promptly answered "NOT MUCH."

On January 1st, 1887, twenty residents of Williamsport, this State, agreed to abstain from the use of tobacco during the year. Each was to pay three dollars per month that he kept his promise, the whole to form a fund to be distributed on the following New Year's day to the members who had not indulged in the weed. Four of them did not break their promise and they each received $54.75.

"I don't see why you should sneer at my engagement ring," said the fair girl, with a flush of indignation on her cheek. "It's a great deal prettier than the one you wore three years ago, and haven't worn since!" "My dear," replied her friend, with a cool, far-away look in her voice: "not prettier, but quite as pretty. It is the same ring."

Catarrh Cured.

A clergyman, after years of suffering from that loathsome disease, Catarrh, and vainly trying every known remedy, at last found a prescription which completely cured and saved him from death. Any sufferer from this dreadful disease sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Prof. J. A. Lawrence, 212 East 9th St., New York, will receive the recipe free of charge.

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Mrs. N. B. De Saussure, for five years Assistant to the Lady Principal at Vassar College, will open the house No. 171 Joralemon Street, for the benefit of young ladies wishing to attend the sessions of the Packer Collegiate Institute, on or after September 15th, 1887.

In addition to the most approved sanitary conditions, and all modern improvements in heating and ventilation, the house presents superior advantages of location, being directly opposite the Institute, and within a few minutes walk of the Academy of Music, Historical Society Hall, the Mercantile Library, and leading churches of all denominations.

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PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 9, 1888.

The impetus given by the great current of events dashing through last year carries us forward to attempt larger things for the new year.

1888 shall be indeed a *leap* year; better service and usefulness in every direction.

Circumstances combine to help us do some fine things for our friends from the beginning of the new year.

We haven't more than a single sentence to say about great sales. We are making them every day. That's what the store is for. We always have lots of goods that are marked down.

A daily drum-beat calls up all the old soldiers of goods and gives them a double-quick-step toward the door.

So, then, note the fact that, no matter what the reason, there can always be found here lots and lots of good things as cheap, and often cheaper, than elsewhere—reduced from day to day because they must be closed out.

We cannot wait for a certain month to sell down, but continually watch, like the look-out on the ship. We seek the open channel of quickest progress and steer clear of all that slops our way.

Now, then, let us strike the key-note of the new year. With might and main we grasp the ropes, and, as we haul, ring out loud and long—

"The newest goods"
"The freshest goods"
"The choicest goods"
"The very best of very best."

We crowd ourselves to open the new things. Your money shall take fresh goods at no greater cost than might otherwise go into old, hammered-down stock.

Thus we hope to brighten our store, increase the activity o' our stock, and greaten our trade.

This is our way of starting the new year. If you like it when you see what we are doing say so to your friends.

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He has always ready for sale a splendid Stock of Gents' Wigs, Toupees, Ladies' Wigs, Half Wigs, Frizettes, Braids, Curls, etc., beautifully manufactured, and as cheap as any establishment in the Union. Letters from any part of the world will receive attention.

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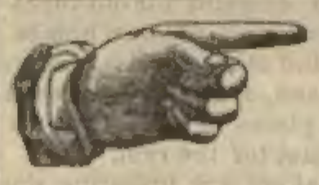

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Anyone knowing a tune, either "in the head," as it is called, or able to hum, whistle or sing, can play it WITHOUT ANY PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF MUSIC OR THE INSTRUMENTS. In fact it may be the first time they have ever seen a piano or organ, yet if they know so much as to whistle or hum a tune—say "Way Down on the Swanee River," for instance—they can play it IMMEDIATELY, correctly and with good effect, on the piano or organ, with the assistance of this GUIDE. THE GUIDE shows how the tunes are to be played with both hands and in different keys. Thus the player has the full effect of the bass and treble clefs, together with the power of making correct and harmonious chords in accompaniments. It must be plainly understood that the Guide will not make an accomplished musician without study. It will do nothing of the kind. What it can do, do well and WITHOUT FAIL is to enable anyone understanding the nature of a tune or air in music to play such tunes or airs, without ever having opened a music book, and without previously needing to know the difference between A or G, a half-note or a quarter-note, a sharp or a flat. The Guide is placed on the instrument, and the player, without reference to anything but what he is shown by it to do, can in a few moments play the piece accurately and without the least trouble. Although it does not and never can supplant regular books of study, it will be of incalculable assistance to the player by "ear" and all others who are their own instructors. By giving the student the power to play IMMEDIATELY twelve tunes of different character—this number of pieces being sent with each Guide—the ear grows accustomed to the sounds, and the fingers used to the position and touch of the keys. So, after a very little practice with the Guide, it will be easy to pick out, almost with the skill and rapidity of the trained player, any air or tune that may be heard or known.

The Guide, we repeat, will not learn how to read the common sheet music. But it will teach those who cannot spend years learning an instrument, how to learn a number of tunes without EITHER PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OR STUDY. A child if it can say its A, B, C's and knows a tune—say "The Sweet Bye and Bye"—can play it, after a few attempts, quite well. There are many who would like to be able to do this, for their own and the amusement of others, and to such we commend The Guide as BOUND TO DO for them ALL WE SAY. Its cheapness and usefulness, moreover, would make it a very good present to give a person, whether young or old, at Christmas. Almost every home in the land has a piano, organ or melodeon, whereon seldom more than one of the family can play. With this Guide in the house everybody can make more or less good use of their instruments.

The Guide will be sent to any address, all postage paid, on receipt of FIFTY CENTS. (Postage stamps, 2's, taken.) For Ten Cents extra a music book, containing the words and music for 100 popular songs, will be sent with The Guide. Address

THE GUIDE MUSIC CO.,

726 SANSOM ST., PHILADELPHIA.

Latest Fashion Phases.

There is a great difficulty in describing the winter gowns in such a manner as to make the actual novelties take the prominence they ought, because no verbal account easily brings them to the mind's eye.

Their beauty consists in the perfection with which the skirts are hung, standing out a great deal at the back, apparently without any visible under-propping. This is shown in one having a gray woollen ground, with broad velvet stripes of terra-cotta, olive, brown and blue, intermingled with plain gray; the fulness at the back of the waist falls in two jelly-bag points, all the rest of the skirt being a most successful study of straight lines; the bodice is made quite plain in the striped material.

Something new, something entirely different from what the rest of the world has, is the one chief desideratum in dress, and this customers may secure, if they are so minded.

A fine red serge has the entire bodice from the throat to the edge of the basque, covered with inch-wide black braid tapering at the waist, a most becoming arrangement. Similar braiding is applied diagonally on the sides of the skirt, between draperies of plain red. Braiding is becoming quite an art.

There are almost as many braids to be had as threads for embroidery. Quite a new kind is silk, edged with gold or silver, which gives tone and substance to the Soutache. A gray striped woollen had side panels, quite narrow, with gray silver-edged braid laid on gray poult de soie; a narrow waistcoat of the same on the front of the bodice, and forming the collar, which was high and firm.

The back of this skirt was cut entirely on the cross. A beautiful shade of heliotrope cloth was braided to the depth of half a yard in a large floral pattern, with black and gold braid. The lower skirt was caught up at the side, and the braiding appeared on the bodice.

Other gowns are trimmed with fine cord and braid combined, and a green cloth with similar braiding has the edge of the skirt, cuffs and collar trimmed with otter and lapels of brown cloth. Another green dress had a pointed plastron of beige cloth, outlined with otter, a similar trimming appearing on the hem.

Check cloths are still employed for useful winter gowns, and these are cut on a new principle, whereby the number of seams are minimised. Others have revers on the bodice, edged both sides with tucks. In some the bodices and skirts are so cut that, meeting, they form points. Plush is used as trimming on many cloth costumes. A mixture of blue and fawn cloth, braided in gold, a line of gold braiding carried down the sides of the arm. The blue cloth skirt falls over a beige one, richly braided. The jackets are truly smart. One in beige cloth, showing no fastening, has a pointed plastron of otter, which edges the neck and cuffs. It is also elaborately braided *en militaire*, with black braid. Some black jackets, with aiguillettes for the epaulettes, show a narrow red waistcoat, closely bordered with gold mess buttons.

The cloaks embody many new ideas. One made of fine greuat cloth was lined with a tender shade of pink satin. It was gathered in many rows at the neck, while beneath was a close-fitting under cloak; the outer one hung to the feet and showed the lining in the front. Another is in green plush, equally long, with shoulder pieces, lengthening into hanging sleeves made of cloth richly braided; it fits closely at the back, and is a handsome and important looking garment.

A little novelty are boas made of ice wool in beige, to resemble otter; the gray recalling blue fox; but they are also made in light pinks blues and creams, when they are just a comfortable, inexpensive wrap for the throat in the evening.

As the winter advances there is a great demand for warm fabrics. The velours de laine is being used for mantles in decided colors—red, heliotrope and green. There is a bloom upon them like a ripe peach, and the stuff is soft to the touch as velvet or the finest wadding. They are much used for opera cloaks.

A beautiful one of another kind, imported from Paris, is made in brown plush, the front entirely yellow satin, embroidered all over in tinsel thread, with fine floral sprays, the whole bordered with rat-tail fringe, alternately brown and gold.

The Russian cloaks are the newest for traveling; they are an exact copy of what may be seen worn by Russian and German Jews at Continental fairs. They are lined with fur, which turns over into a roll collar and borders the front. There is no fastening, and they are made throughout coat fashion of thick brocaded cloth.

The newest umbrellas are of crocidilite. It is mounted with chased silver handles, or the same in beaten gold; handles of this kind have never been seen before.

Dinner gowns are now in request, and one in vieux rose poult de soie is trimmed with fine Chantilly lace. This tint is still most fashionable, and the particular tone in the gown is best described as a pink with a dash of delicate mauve interblended, both colors mellowed by time. The draperies are all fringed at the edge and hang long, and are so caught up on the hips that they form a panier. The lace is carried across the panels, which are cut in rounded scallops at the edge, and there is a high-looped bow at the side, with fringed ends of the same. Low bodices are universally worn even for theatres, and this low bodice is simply draped with lace.

Beige is another favorite tone; it looks well by day and lights up well at night. A soft shade of poult de soie with panels of gauze guipure and watered ribbon over pink. The draperies are straight in front, caught up on the side with three looped ends, ending in silver and gold tags. These ends thus tasseled are a feature in fashions; at the back of the waist there is a butterfly bow, the low bodice is pointed back and front, and draped with the embroidered gauze lined with pink. Both these skirts just touch the ground.

Some uncommon dinner gowns are made in Indienne, or silk zephyr, which is of dust color, with wide interwoven borderings of gold. It had been arranged as a kilted skirt, with the strips of gold embroidery coming up the front, the upper skirt draped in one long piece, the two front ends caught up and turned backwards, forming paniers—a simple and original treatment. Long ribbon bows fell at the side, and gold was interwoven in the bodice. A velvet gown had a wide plain trained skirt with a box-pleat at the side seams, the bodice draped with aerophane starting from the shoulders, with folds of velvet on the outside; the sleeves plain to the elbow, with aerophane falling below. The shade of the velvet was bronze, which harmonised well with the cream aerophane.

Anything distinctively new in millinery is welcome. The Tara is a floral bonnet, made up with no foundation save the stems of roses, and is trimmed with rose, shamrock and thistle, a pretty combination. The Angouleme hat has three points, which meet in the centre; it is made in felt or velvet. It forms a point in front, and turns up square at the back. It might have surmounted powdered hairs hundred years ago, it is so quaint and so eminently becoming.

Odds and Ends.

ABOUT HOUSEHOLD DECORATIONS.

There is a great demand for old furniture for the decoration of modern homes. Old tables, chairs and other articles, laboriously carved by hand, are being gathered from their hiding places in the old world and put on the market for the rich.

The furniture makers are imitating the antique, and in many cases producing more artistic work in the style of the past ages than the artisans of those times have left. There is no reliable test of old artistic furniture. No formula can be given to insure the buyer against making mistakes. The framework may be what it professes to be, for it pays better to buy old sideboards and secretaries made originally in plain wood and add the inlaying and the carving than to make the whole thing new from the foundations.

Some of the results of this enriching process, to use the trade term, are quite equal to the old work. Although the business of thus meeting the demand for old work without the trouble of hunting it up is dishonest, such dealers have greatly encouraged artistic workmanship in good marquetry or old furniture; beside which the trade have discovered that the present passion for old furniture is not a mere caprice, that it is quite distinct from the taste for the antique, and has its root in a genuine preference for certain types of furniture which were made a century ago, and which it is their interest to supply as well as it was that of their predecessors.

Choice foreign carving on pianos and other articles of furniture is grounded out, that is, sunk into the wood, so as not to interfere with real use, and is applied sparingly and with exquisite effect. This light sunk carved work has the advantage of preserving gold and coloring when used.

Dining-room furniture in antique oak is very handsome. The forms grow more massive, the carving more elaborate, there is a tendency to soften the outlines, massing the effect in a strong fashion, over an etched or finely picked background.

Oval forms seem to be the favorite in chamber furniture. One very fine model is developed in mahogany, the bedstead has a medium high head and foot board both of oblong form, finely beaded along the edge, highly polished in the centre space.

One benefit of the craze for the antique is the introduction of handsome carvings and fine wood finishings in the decoration of interiors.

A popular dwelling interior has the centre wall space covered with the sponge finish in plain panels, while the freize is treated in color; the background has a metalic touch of sparkling golden hue, while over this are clustered great ears of corn, with the husks drawn back. Another freize shows grasses and the fronds of ferns just unfolding, above a border of copper-colored surface, surmounting the plain sponge-touched centre wall space.

Draperies of deep brown velours are used, and prove very effective, throwing into great prominence the soft, warm brown tones of the wall.

Screens are useful to hide open doors in summer, to intercept searching draughts in winter, to break the monotony of square rooms, to hide odds and ends which are useful but create a litter if left about, to screen from view details of service at meals and for ornament.

Dining-room screens should be massive and somewhat somber. Carved frames are suitable for painted tapestry, heavy embroideries, brocaded silk, or raised incrusta. Ebonized wood picked out with gold, and stained bamboo are handsome.

Light and fanciful screens are suitable for drawing-room or boudoir, while plush is effective.

Screens should never be incongruous with their surroundings.

Rich stained glass is beautiful for fire screens. Silvered glass painted in oils is pretty. Ferns and bowers dried and placed between two clear glasses are charming.

Fire screens should be transparent or semi-transparent, giving a view of the fire, while affording protection from it.

Colored gauze or bolting cloth, decorated with painting or needlework, is admirable for a fire screen.

Raised incrusta, decorated with metallic colors, makes a handsome and inexpensive screen.

Japanese embroideries on black or colored gauze are pretty in front of a window where the view is undesirable.

Folded chints in light bamboo frames makes fresh and gay screens for bedrooms.

Scrap screens or colored pictures, Christmas and birthday cards, etc., are bright and interesting for smoking and morning rooms. Mastic varnish should be used, as it does not turn yellow and discolor the pictures.

For large screens one design carried right through the three panels looks less stiff than using an entirely separate subject for each panel.

Indian footwork screens are in many designs, some exquisitely pretty.

The Japanese screens are infinite in variety, and almost invariably good in design. The Japanese know how to occupy a space rather than fill it.

A simple realistic branch thrown across a panel with true artistic feeling will be far more pleasing and truly decorative in effect than if the whole space be covered with a labored design.

A very effective square screen can be made by placing on a ground of old gold plush a stuffed peacock, the body and head projecting, while the outspread tail lies flat against the background.

Small two-fold or three-fold screens can be devised in endless variety. These are in reality more for ornament than use, and may be as fanciful as inventive genius can make them.

A very original three-fold screen executed to order for a dining-room, regardless of cost, was made as follows: In the middle of the centre panel was mounted a beautifully stuffed group of pheasants; the background composed entirely of pheasant's feathers, made to present a smooth, even surface of rich coloring. The panels on either side were treated in precisely the same manner, only wild ducks were substituted for pheasants. The contrast thus obtained of velvety greens and browns was indescribably beautiful. The whole was mounted in richly carved oak of a dark shade.

THE weakest spot in every man is where he thinks himself to be the wisest.

Confidential Correspondents.

W. C.—The law requires that your wife should sign the deed, also in transferring property that is sold, and left to you by your father.

M. W. B.—We only know of his having two children, and we cannot give their names. One is a Catholic priest, and the other is married to a lieutenant in the navy or army, we are unable to say which.

MRS. J. G. H.—We do not give the names of business houses in this column. Send a postal addressed to yourself, and we will forward the required information. The real name of the song is "Juanita." That of the waltz is "Tyrolean Waltz."

HARRY.—If you have good imitative powers, it is, no doubt, possible for you to become a ventriloquist, after reading one of the books you mention. Ventriloquism is simply a trick, and does not depend upon any peculiarity in the vocal organs.

HENRY.—The most appropriate birthday presents to young ladies are books, papers, magazines, or some neat little personal ornament, of no great pecuniary value. All depends on the relationship, the degree of intimacy, and the position in society.

PESTLE.—The vampire-bat of South America is a blood-sucker; the harmless little bats of this country prey on insects—in fact, they fulfill the same purpose in the economy of nature in checking the multiplication of nocturnal insects as the swallows do with regard to the diurnal. The Marches were the old boundaries between England and Wales and England and Scotland.

BATES.—The authorities give the year 42 as the date at which the Apostle Peter went to Rome and became bishop of that diocese. It was not till many years afterwards that the Bishop of Rome became the head of the Church, and took precedence of all other ecclesiastical magnates as the Pope. But in speaking of the subject historically, Peter, the first Bishop of Rome, is also called the first Pope.

DATE.—There have been traditions from time immemorial with regard to the mystical powers supposed to be possessed by the seventh son of a seventh son. But to be the seventh son of a first, or second, or sixth, or eighth son, or any son except a seventh son, is not supposed to give one any peculiar powers. There are many families in which there are seven sons or more; and, of course, in every such family there is a seventh son.

J. Y.—Suppose the lady had played such a trick on either of you, how would you like to have her behave in the matter? You did wrong to write her the letter, and you are doing wrong to keep still about it while other persons are subjected to suspicion and accusation on account of your conduct. You should let the lady know the truth of the matter. It is not likely that she would be very unforgiving. If you should frankly own up to the truth.

SUBSCRIBER.—It is not the practice, although you may have noticed it in one or two instances, to distinguish between Scotch and Irish names with the prefix Mac or O by using an inverted comma in one case and an apostrophe in the other—an apostrophe being almost universally employed in both instances. The prefix has in all such cases the same meaning—son—corresponding with Fitz in names of Roman origin, and with Ap in Welsh surnames.

J. R. O.—Time balls are balls which fall at a particular moment of time. They are usually set in some high and conspicuous place, and where they can be seen by the multitude, and are connected by delicate machinery and electrical wires with a clock which keeps accurate time. At the moment the ball is to fall, say precisely at noon, the machinery attached to the clock is brought in contact with the electrical battery and wire that connect with the ball, and the ball falls instantaneously; and by its fall, the fact that it is precisely twelve o'clock, noon, is communicated to the public.

E. G. M. S.—You have met one you love just a little too late. The position is a very difficult one. You are engaged to a girl for whom you do not care. Take the manly course and tell her how your feelings have changed; if she binds you after that, then stand to your bargain like a man, and take all the consequences, though we warn you that the said consequences will be bitter. "Our acts our angels are;" you have blundered into a rash engagement; you have wasted a girl's time, and your fate now depends on her. Act like a brave and honorable fellow, and tell the truth. It is a miserable affair; but unfortunately the mysterious world is full of ironic situations.

POETRY.—The Gulf Stream derives its name from the Gulf of Mexico, out of which it flows between the coast of Florida on the one side, and Cuba and the Bahama Islands and shoals on the other. With a breadth of about fifty miles in its narrowest portion, and a speed at times of five miles an hour, it flows along our coast in a north-easterly direction, gradually widening in volume and slackening in velocity until it reaches Newfoundland, where it turns off and crosses the Atlantic in two portions—one turning eastwards towards the Azores and Morocco, the other going to lave the shores of Britain, Norway, etc. Its waters are of a deep blue, which clearly defines it from the light green of the seas through which it passes in its early course; and it abounds with masses of sea-weed, and with fish and animalculæ. As it leaves the Mexican gulf it has a warmth of 86° Fah., several degrees higher than that of the ocean at the equator; and even by the time it has reached the coast of Labrador the temperature has only fallen to 75°.

YOUNG.—The production of a good, clear, healthy complexion is not so difficult a task as is generally supposed; it depends upon perfect health of body. Late hours, crowded parties, heated and improperly-ventilated rooms, and the breathing of carbonic acid gas, these cause a disturbance of the vital functions, and consequently impair the complexion. The occupations of many females, especially compositresses and dressmakers, are of a nature to impair their bodily health, and of course destroy that freshness and beauty of skin which they originally possessed in common with the ladies whose dresses they make. Like them, they are confined in close and crowded rooms; but they are employed, besides, in laborious occupations, and cramped by the attitude which they are forced to assume during from ten to twelve hours daily. Goodness of complexion, whether the skin be fair or brown, is incompatible with excess of bodily or mental labor, or excess of pleasure and dissipation. Proper attention to the skin, plenty of exercise in the open air, wholesome diet, reasonable hours, and occasional medicine, will do more to beautify the complexion than all the medicine which could be prescribed.